

Man sought in LA publicist's death kills himself



FILE - This undated photo released by the California Department of Motor Vehicles shows Hollywood publicist Ronni Sue Chasen, who was shot to death Nov. 16, 2010, in her Mercedes-Benz in a Beverly Hills neighborhood. The mayor of Beverly Hills says detectives believe a Chasen was probably shot from another vehicle, possibly an SUV, in a targeted hit.

(AP Photo)

By THOMAS WATKINS,
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A man wanted in the slaying of a Hollywood publicist killed himself in the lobby of a dreary Los Angeles hotel as police closed in to question him — the latest mysterious turn in a case that began on a posh stretch of Beverly Hills. The death deepened the mystery into the slaying of Ronni Chasen, who was shot in her luxury Mercedes as she drove home from the premier of an Oscar contender last month. Police have been investigating whether it was a hit or some other type of attack. Witnesses said the man appeared to shoot himself in the head Wednesday, splattering blood across the lobby of a residential hotel where people rented rooms by the month.

Continued on Page A3

SECTION B

Local News	1
Island Guide	8
Comics/Classifieds	10
Latino	14
Calendar	16

UN weather agency: 2010 among 3 hottest years

Page B14

STRANDED



Truck driver John Joyce clears ice from his radiator grille while stranded in a long line of vehicles on the New York State Thruway during a winter storm in Buffalo, N.Y., Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010.

(AP Photo/David Duprey)
Page A2

Biggest-ever Israeli forest fire kills dozens



A burnt bus is seen near kibbutz Beit Oren, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010. The bus burst into flames as it raced to an Israeli prison during a massive forest fire Thursday, killing dozens of prison guards participating in the rescue mission, officials said, in one of the deadliest accidents in the nation's history.

DAN BALILTY
Associated Press

MEGADIM, Israel (AP) devastated one of the

Associated Press

— The worst forest fire in Israel's history on Thursday

country's few forested areas, killing at least 36 guards on their way to rescue inmates at a prison in the fire zone, destroying homes and forcing the evacuation of thousands. The fire ripped through the Carmel forest in Israel's Galilee, reaching the coastal city of Haifa, jumping from place to place in the forest left tinder-dry by a lack of rain and unseasonably hot weather.

Israel appealed for international assistance, a measure of the severity of the disaster, and Turkey put aside recent tensions to pledge aid. Investigators speculated that the fire could have been set accidentally, or it might have

been a criminal act, but pretty much ruled out some sort of attack by a Palestinian group. "This is a disaster of unprecedented proportions," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said. The fire was still burning out of control as midnight approached. Most of the dead were Prison Service guards racing through the fire toward a prison to evacuate the inmates, most of them Palestinians. A tree fell across the road, blocking their bus. Some guards were burned alive inside, while others died as they tried to flee. Fourteen bodies were found near the charred skeleton of the bus 10 hours after the fire started.

Continued on Page A13

Hundreds of motorists stranded hours on NY hwy



Truck driver John Joyce waits in a long line of stranded vehicles on the New York State Thruway during a winter storm in Buffalo, N.Y., Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010.

By CAROLYN THOMPSON,
Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Hundreds of cold and hungry motorists spent hours Thursday stranded on a western New York highway after an accident caused a backup and the idling trucks and cars got stuck in heavy snow.

A storm that began Wednesday and continued overnight buried parts of Buffalo and its suburbs under 2 feet of snow, but largely spared the downtown. Dozens of schools canceled classes.

After a truck jackknifed on

(AP Photo/David Duprey)

Interstate 90 on Wednesday evening, police closed the highway about 3 a.m. Thursday when vehicles became backed up and buried in blowing snow, State Trooper Daniel Golinski said. Drivers also were stranded on a 3-mile stretch of Interstate 190.

By midday, parts of I-90 were reopened and the stretch of I-190 reopened shortly afterward.

Jack Geiselman took his 14-hours stranded on the highway in 32-degree weather in stride.

“I tend not to be a ranter-and-raver about things and the point is, it’s nothing I have any control over,” the 60-year-old semi-retired civil engineer said. “I guess the way I look at it is, it’s over. I guess stuff happens. It’s not the end of the world.”

Geiselman was traveling in a Honda Civic from Keene, N.Y., to Cleveland with his black lab Boomer to help his daughter get her house ready for a baby due between Christmas and New Year. He had with him a sleeping bag and plenty of warm clothing and gas. He said state troopers came by with coffee and food for people in cars.

Emergency crews on ATVs passed out water and protein bars, and buses picked up motorists and delivered them to a shelter at a senior citizen center.

State Police had no reports of medical emergencies, although one older motorist who uses oxygen was among the stranded and was taken to safety, said Capt. Michael Nigrelli.

Not to be discouraged, two truck drivers who left their tandems idling in the early morning tramped through the snow for about half a mile to pick up a breakfast sandwich

and coffee off the highway. They seemed almost cheerful despite the hit on their livelihood.

“The wheels are not moving and we’re making nothing,” said Don Lanphere, 51, a trucker for 32 years who was hauling dog food. “The only guys making money are the plow operators.”

“I had the radio on listening,” said Curt Doverspike, 40, a trucker from Jamestown. “They said we should be getting out soon. Nothing ever happened so we just went to bed, woke up this morning. We’re just kind of used to it.” He said regular travelers were venting their frustrations but the truck drivers were calmer. “There’s traffic jams, accidents all the time,” Doverspike said. “You just get used to it. I guess it’s easier for us than those in the cars because they get frustrated. We have a bed. If we get bored, we lay down and go to bed.”

Other truckers left the road to find refuge at truck stops, parking lots and city streets, but most kept their rigs parked on the highway, especially the tandem drivers who, with two trailers behind them, are allowed to get off the highway only at designated exits.

Matt Welling was hauling a

double tractor-trailer full of groceries when traffic came to a standstill. He spent the night “sitting back, playing a little Solitaire on the computer, taking a nap,” the Wegmans driver said after more than eight hours stuck on the road. “I’m pretty chilly, hungry. A nice cup of coffee would do pretty well right now,” he said by cell phone.

Police said an 11-mile stretch of road along Buffalo’s eastern edge remained closed Thursday afternoon, and tractor-trailers remained the primary source of gridlock. Buffalo’s mayor issued a driving ban for the city’s southern section.

The snow was expected to shift north through Buffalo during the day.

In Cattaraugus County on New York’s southwestern edge, flooding was the bigger problem following heavy rain. Two emergency shelters were opened, in Olean and Portville, as the Allegheny River reached moderate flood stage. Between 50 and 100 homes were affected, said Stephanie Timblin, spokeswoman for the county’s Office of Emergency Services.

The river was expected to crest Thursday afternoon and drop overnight. □

Town that Disney built has 1st killing since start

By TAMARA LUSH,
Associated Press

CELEBRATION, Fla. — Celebration, Disney’s master-planned, picture-perfect central Florida community, has never reported a homicide in its 14-year existence — until this week.

Residents of the town five miles south of Walt Disney World woke up Tuesday to the sight of yellow crime-scene tape wrapped around a condo near the Christmas-decorated downtown, where Bing Crosby croons from speakers hidden in the foliage. A 58-year-old neighbor who lived alone with his Chihuahua had been slain over the long Thanksgiving weekend, Osceola County sheriff’s deputies said.

The community’s famous friendliness is what brought investigators to Matteo Giovanditto’s

Neighbors hadn’t seen him for days, so they filed a missing person’s report, then went into his condo a day later and found him.

A few years ago, a resident joked with a reporter that Celebration would feel like a real town when a bike was stolen. Now, it has an unsolved killing on its hands.

With 11,000 residents, Celebration is something of an anomaly in Central Florida. There’s no suburban sprawl — the entire place is reminiscent of a quaint New England village.

It’s the kind of town where people give Christmas gifts to their favorite Starbucks barista, where welcoming wooden rocking chairs sit lakeside on a sidewalk without being stolen, where neighbors tend to get suspicious if they notice you’re not around.

And that’s what happened with Giovanditto, detectives say. Neighbors hadn’t seen Giovanditto, who owned a bottom-floor condo at a building called The Idlewyld, since the day before Thanksgiving. His black Corvette was also missing. A neighbor was supposed to walk Giovanditto’s dog, Lucy, over the weekend, but he wasn’t responding to her calls. A missing person’s report was filed Sunday, and the next day neighbors went into his apartment and found his body. Investigators won’t say what type of scene they encountered, or how Giovanditto died.

“This is very rare and unusual for a crime of this magnitude to occur in this community,” said Twis Lizasuain, a sheriff’s spokeswoman.

On Tuesday, detectives poked a Crimestoppers sign offering



This photo taken Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2010, shows a reward sign near the entrance to a condominium in Celebration, Fla. Police are investigating the first ever murder in Celebration, the Disney-developed community in Florida.

(AP Photo/John Raoux)

a reward into the lush grass outside the condo, next to a receptacle for dog waste bags. They found the Corvette at an apartment building in a neighboring Orlando suburb. His relatives were notified of his death.

As word of the homicide blew around town like the leaves

from the maple trees that line the sidewalks, people started to worry.

“I’ve always thought of Celebration as a very safe community,” said Heather Hardy, who lives there six months a year and was sitting on a wooden rocker downtown, reading a book. □



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PUBLICIST

Continued from Front Page

The building is located in a blue-collar stretch of warehouses, tailors and travel agencies, and is next door to a dive bar called Gold Diggers Entertainment.

Resident Anmmicka Sanders said Thursday when police let her back in the building Wednesday night, she saw blood all over the stairwell and a body covered up by a white sheet.

The dead man has been identified but the coroner has not released his name because the next of kin has not been notified, Los Angeles County coroner's spokesman Craig Harvey said Thursday. He is a black male in his 40s and his last known place of residence has not been established, Harvey said.

Beverly Hills police Chief David Snowden told The Associated Press in an e-mail that the man "was a person of interest only" in Chasen's death in Beverly Hills. Police spokesman Tony Lee emphasized at a news conference that the murder investigation was not over.

The Los Angeles Times, citing four unnamed sources, reported Thursday that the man was a suspect in the case and had been under surveillance for some time.

Someone shot Chasen, 64, multiple times as she drove home from a party after attending the premiere of the movie "Burlesque," whose soundtrack she was promoting for an Oscar nomination.

The attack stunned Hollywood, where Chasen was a revered figure after promoting the Oscar-winning film "Driving Miss Daisy" and other major movies and stars since the 1970s. It came in the midst of award season, her busiest time of

year, when she helped studios mount expensive promotion campaigns for films.

Police haven't released a possible motive in her slaying, and they remained tightlipped about progress in the investigation. The suicide Wednesday was first reported by the Los Angeles Times. Terri Gilpin, a building resident, said she was taking a nap when she heard a single shot fired.

"I thought it was backfire, but I was kind of half-asleep, in a drowsy state of mind," she said. "It was kind of like a pop."

Harvey Apartments tenant Brandon Harrison told the Times that the man described himself as an ex-convict who'd been sentenced to state prison twice, most recently for firearms and drug convictions.

"He told me several times, 'If it ever came back down to me going to prison, I would die first,'" Harrison said.

The man moved into the building three months ago, but was evicted, Harrison told the paper. He returned to the building often and asked Harrison and others if police had been looking for him.

He was waiting for a \$10,000 payment, Harrison said, but told different stories about why — once saying it was for a job and another time saying it was from a lawsuit.

The building has about 170 units with rents starting at about \$625 a month, 25-year-old resident Terry Pendergrass said.

Two blocks of Santa Monica Boulevard were shut down and dozens of officers and squad cars were gathered outside the four-story hotel, which was cordoned off with yellow police tape.

Earlier Wednesday, a retired investigator who saw a preliminary coroner's report

on Chasen's shooting said the killer was an expert shot who was able to squeeze off multiple rounds in a tight and deadly formation.

Gil Carrillo, who recently retired as a lieutenant after 38 years with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, said he reviewed the document after it was obtained by KTTV Fox 11 News.

"The thing that stands out is the shots — where they were and the lack of hits anywhere else," Carrillo told The Associated Press. "It's a good shot group."

The close grouping suggests the shooting was carried out by a hit man and was not the result of a gang attack or road rage, Carrillo told the AP.

KTTV said it appeared Chasen was shot three times in the right chest area and twice in the right shoulder.

"Whoever was shooting was aiming for center mass, and they got center mass," Carrillo said.

Coroner's spokesman Ed Winter would not confirm the authenticity of the document cited by Carrillo, which apparently was written by an investigator before Chasen's autopsy. But Carrillo said he was certain it was genuine.

The document says a hollow-point, 9-mm bullet was recovered from Chasen's body, though Carrillo cautioned that ballistics tests could reveal the slug was a different caliber.

Investigators believe Chasen was shot as she waited to turn left from Sunset Boulevard to Whittier Drive, a road she could have taken to get back to her home in West Los Angeles. After she was shot, she drove about a quarter mile down Whittier before crashing into a light pole.

Chasen was later pronounced dead at a hospital. □



Los Angeles Police Department officers and Beverly Hills Police Department detectives stand outside the Harvey Apartments on December 1. A suspect in the killing of a Hollywood PR agent which rocked Tinseltown shot himself dead as police closed in -- after bragging about committing the murder, reports and an ex neighbor said Thursday.



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Doctor: Suspect in Smart case is schizophrenic



Elizabeth Smart climbs from truck to enter side door of the Frank Moss Federal Courthouse in Salt Lake City to resume trial of Brian David Mitchell on Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2010. Mitchell, a former street preacher on trial for kidnapping and assaulting Elizabeth Smart.

(AP Photo)

By JENNIFER DOBNER,
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — A clinical psychologist for a federal prison hospital says a former street preacher charged in the abduction of Elizabeth Smart believes he will fight and defeat the anti-Christ.

Dr. Richard DeMier testified Thursday that he diagnosed defendant Brian David Mitchell as a paranoid schizophrenic after being ordered by a court to evaluate him in 2008.

He also says Mitchell thinks he is destined to fulfill a

significant role at the end of the world.

Mitchell is on trial in U.S. District Court on charges of kidnapping and unlawful transportation of a minor across state lines.

Defense attorneys contend Mitchell is mentally ill and can't be held responsible for the crimes.

Prosecutors contend Mitchell is faking mental illness to avoid prosecution.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. Check back soon for further information. AP's earlier story is below.

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Kidnap victim Elizabeth Smart stormed from a Utah courtroom Wednesday as a psychiatrist testified that her alleged attacker had been motivated by a desire to have

children and create a new race in an imaginary Zion.

Forensic psychiatrist Paul Whitehead took the witness stand under subpoena during the federal trial of former street preacher Brian David Mitchell on kidnapping and other charges.

Whitehead, who was subpoenaed to testify by the defense, said he gleaned this information from the journals of Wanda Eileen Barzee, Mitchell's estranged wife, and police reports.

Whitehead said Mitchell and Barzee had been caught shoplifting baby clothes and that they had chastised Smart for saying she did not want to have children.

"Mr. Mitchell was talking with Miss Smart about having babies to the point where Miss

Smart actually picked out a name in case that happened," Whitehead said.

At that point, a visibly angry Smart got up from her seat in the front row of the courtroom and left to a private area. Her mother followed. They both returned to the courtroom about 30 minutes later.

The remarks came as Whitehead explained some of the odd characteristics or red flags he said he saw when trying to determine whether Mitchell suffered from mental illness. Prosecutors, who believe Mitchell is faking mental illness to avoid prosecution, later tried to diffuse the remarks by noting that Barzee wrote her journals during a period of time when she was suffering an untreated mental illness. □



In this undated photo released by the Montana Highway Patrol, officer David Delaitre is shown. Police were searching Wednesday night, Dec. 1, 2010 for a man who shot and killed Delaitre hours earlier on the side of a road near the town of Three Forks, Mont.

(AP Photo/Montana Highway Patrol)

By MATT VOLZ,
Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. — Police are trying to piece together what led a dog trainer to shoot and kill a state trooper along a roadside in southwestern Montana, prompting a manhunt that ended with the suspect found dead in his truck. That's only the first of several unanswered questions surrounding the killing of Montana Highway Patrol officer David Delaitre, 23, who was found dead of a gunshot wound in his vehicle Wednesday afternoon.

Police later found Errol Brent

Montana trooper shot on roadside; suspect found dead

Bouldin, 56, dead in his 1999 green Ford F-250 pickup truck in Broadwater County south of Townsend, which is about 35 miles north of Three Forks. It wasn't clear how police had determined he was the shooter. Also unknown is what led to the encounter between Bouldin and DeLaitre off Montana Highway 2 just outside of Three Forks, where the Gallatin, Jefferson and Madison rivers converge to form the Missouri River.

Police also didn't know or wouldn't say how Bouldin died, whether he took his own life and what weapon or weapons were used to kill DeLaitre and Bouldin.

Gallatin County Sheriff James Cashell said more information would be released at a 2 p.m. press conference Thursday.

Agents from the state Division of Criminal Investigation joined authorities at the scene early Thursday to continue the probe in the light of day, Department of Justice spokeswoman Judy Beck said. Bouldin's ex-wife, Debra Bouldin of Camp Verde, Ariz., told The Associated Press in a telephone interview that he was a dog trainer and that she had not spoken to him since he left Arizona in January 2006. The year before, he nearly died

from a rattlesnake bite. Debra Bouldin said that experience left him a changed man.

"You know how when people have trauma they either become so thankful about everything about life or else they become bitter against life? Brent went to the bitter side," she said. "That was a very life-changing thing for him. What happened after that, I honestly can't tell you." She said her prayers were with the trooper's family. More than 100 federal, state and local law enforcement officers from across southwestern Montana responded to the shooting and authorities closed Highway 2 from the junction of U.S. Highway 287 to Interstate 90 at Three Forks, about 70 miles southeast of Helena.

The Gallatin County sheriff's office said Bouldin lived in Three Forks. Public records show he previously lived in Belgrade, a town about 20 miles away.

Belgrade police Sgt. David Keen said a warrant for Bouldin's arrest was issued Dec. 3, 2009, on a contempt charge, meaning Bouldin either failed to appear in court or did not comply with a court order. Keen said he did not know why the contempt warrant was issued. □

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President Barack Obama gestures while meeting with newly elected governors, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010, at the Blair House across from the White House in Washington.

(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

NYC mayor: Obama has broken campaign promises

By SARA KUGLER FRAZIER,

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who is occasionally mentioned as a long-shot presidential candidate, accused President Barack Obama in a magazine interview of breaking campaign promises and said he needs better advisers.

The billionaire mayor, a Democrat-turned-Republican-turned-independent, flirted with the idea of running in 2008 but eventually abandoned the idea.

He has mostly shied away from criticizing Obama, but that changed in an interview that appears in the December issue of GQ magazine. The magazine chose Bloomberg as one of its “men of the year” for 2010, among company like actor Jeff Bridges, television personality Stephen Colbert and rapper Drake.

“The president, I think, needs some better advisers,” Bloomberg told GQ. “He campaigns, ‘I’m gonna do A,’ and then he doesn’t do it. Now he’s pissed off the supporters and the opponents.”

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The mayor did not elaborate on which promises he believes Obama has broken. Bloomberg also said, as he has in the past, that he does

not intend to run for president “or any other office.”

Asked Thursday about the interview, the former CEO mayor reiterated his criticism of the president and his team, particularly in advocating for American business.

“One of the things that I’ve urged the president to do is to get some business people in his close tight circle,” Bloomberg said. “One of the president’s jobs is to promote American business around the world, sell our products around the world, get people from around the world to come and invest here.”

Bloomberg also had a surprise message for his own aides Thursday. □

Negotiators work on tax deal as House passes bill

By STEPHEN OHLEMACHER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House passed a bill Thursday to extend middle class tax cuts while letting those for the wealthy expire, even as talks continued on extending them all. The House bill was a political maneuver to satisfy Democratic lawmakers’ supporters who oppose extending tax cuts for the wealthy. It has no chance in the Senate, where Democrats need Republican support to pass tax legislation.

House Republican leader John Boehner of Ohio used barnyard language to describe the House vote to reporters during a news conference.

“I’m trying to catch my breath so I don’t refer to this maneuver going on today as chicken crap, all right?” said Boehner, who is in line to become House speaker in January. “But this is nonsense, all right? The election was one month ago. We are 23 months from the next election, and the political games have already started trying to set up the next election.” Sweeping income tax cuts enacted under former President George W. Bush are to expire at the end of the year. If Congress does not act, taxpayers at every income level would be hit with a significant tax increase.

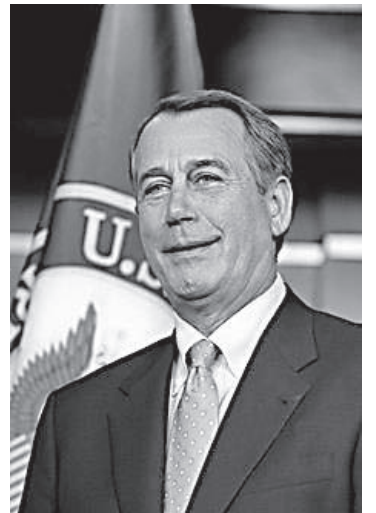
President Barack Obama and Democratic leaders in Congress want to extend the tax cuts only for individuals making less than \$200,000 and married couples making less than \$250,000. The bill passed by the House would do that. The vote was 234 to 188. All but 20 Democrats voted in favor of the bill; all but three Republicans opposed it.

Republicans and some rank-and-file Democrats want to extend the tax cuts for everyone, and the White House has left open the door for a compromise to do that for up to three years.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has indicated he is open to a temporary extension of all the tax cuts. Obama said Thursday he’s optimistic Democrats and Republicans can reach agreement on critical issues in the coming weeks, including the tax controversy.

Speaking to more than 20 newly elected governors, Obama said making sure tax cuts don’t increase for the middle class is his priority.

“I believe it will get resolved,” Obama said. “That doesn’t mean there might not be some posturing over the next several days. But I’m confident in the end people are going to recognize that it’s important for families who are still struggling to have some



House Minority Leader John Boehner of Ohio takes part in a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010.

(AP Photo/Harry Hamburg)

relief and it’s important for our economy to make sure that money is still out there circulating.”

The White House is pressing Congress to extend jobless benefits and other tax credits enacted as part of Obama’s massive economic recovery package last year. Those proposals could form the basis of a compromise on the Bush tax cuts. Beyond unemployment insurance, the White House made the case Thursday for extending Obama’s Making Work Pay tax credit for individuals, a tuition tax credit and a tax break that rewards employers who hire unemployed workers. □



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Mayor holds hope 3 missing Mich. boys are alive



Volunteers Lisa Borton, from left, Diane Moliterno, Joyce Beatty, and Mona Leininger search a field in Williams County outside Pioneer, Ohio, on Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2010. John Skelton, an unemployed long-haul truck driver, was arrested Tuesday on three counts of parental kidnapping of his sons 9-year-old Andrew, 7-year-old Alexander and 5-year-old Tanner Skelton, who have not been seen since Thanksgiving.

(AP Photo/Paul Sancya)

By JOHN SEEWER,
Associated Press

MORENCI, Mich. — A small southern Michigan town has been humbled by tragedy but its people are determined to find three young brothers missing for nearly a week, the mayor said Thursday.

Morenci Mayor Keith Pennington said he is still hopeful the boys are alive, although police have said

they don't expect a positive outcome. It's been a week since 9-year-old Andrew, 9, Alexander, 7 and Tanner Skelton, 5, were last seen.

"We will not be satisfied until our boys are home," Pennington said.

Their father, John Skelton, is fighting extradition from Ohio to Michigan, where he faces three kidnapping charges. Morenci Police Chief

Larry Weeks said Skelton, 39, is asking for a lawyer and that authorities have had no contact with him during the past few days.

He remains jailed on a \$3 million bond and awaits a Dec. 14 hearing in Toledo.

Volunteers and authorities searched along roads and in ponds and quarries across the boundary in Ohio, just miles from the town where the boys lived and were last seen on Thanksgiving. Morenci, a community of about 2,000 residents, is 75 miles southwest of Detroit.

Search crews and dive teams were checking out specific sites in Williams County, Ohio, based on tips.

Still, the search appeared to remain wide open as authorities cast a wide net across the area.

The boys' mother, Tanya Skelton, and family members have said little since the disappearance. A family friend, Kathye Herrera, read from a statement Thursday thanking the hundreds of volunteers.

"We know how hard everyone has been working," Herrera

said, referring to "our precious little boys."

The family, she said, supported the decision to suspend the search over the weekend so authorities can review what they've collected and determine what to do next.

Tanya Skelton, 44, reported the boys missing last Friday when their father didn't return them. Police say he tried to hang himself and that he lied to investigators when he said he first gave the boys to a female acquaintance to hand over to their mother.

She filed for divorce in September. A judge gave her custody of the boys, but she and John Skelton reached an agreement on visitation.

Morenci United Methodist Church Rev. Donna Galloway said Wednesday she has spoken with Tanya Skelton since the boys' disappearance, and that she thinks it's absurd when people ask how Skelton's doing.

"How would you be doing?" Galloway said. "She wants her boys home. We all want her boys home. She's a mom." □

Tough year for wife of man detained as spy in Cuba

By JESSICA GRESKO,

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In the year her American husband has been detained in Cuba, accused of spying for the U.S., Judy Gross has been forced to sell the family home in Maryland and move into a small apartment in Washington. Her younger daughter, distraught and crying as her father's birthday approached, crashed and totaled her car. Her older daughter has been diagnosed with breast cancer.

More than 1,100 miles away, Alan Gross passes his days in a Cuban military hospital, watching baseball on a small television or jamming with his jailers on a stringed instrument they gave him.

When Alan Gross left for Cuba last December, his wife says he planned to spend just 10 days there helping to set up Internet access for members of the country's small Jewish population, believed to number about 1,500.

He was arrested at his hotel a year ago Friday, accused by Cuban President Raul Castro and other senior leaders of spying.

"Every morning I wake up and for a few seconds it's like a normal morning, and then I remember ... he's gone," his wife, Judy Gross, told The Associated Press in an interview. His detention has become a sticking point in relations between the U.S. and Cuba, two countries that have been at odds for decades. U.S. officials have denied claims he is a spy and said no progress on the relationship between the countries can be made until Gross is released.

He was a subcontractor for an economic development organization called Development Alternatives Inc. of Bethesda, Md. His work was part of a program of the U.S. Agency for International Development, a government agency that provides economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide but has also been criticized by Cuba for seeking to promote democratic change on the island.

The specifics of what he was doing or what he might have done to upset the Cuban government are unclear.

Judy Gross is adamant that her husband is not a spy. After all, she says, why would the U.S. government pick someone who didn't know Spanish?

"He's a humanitarian, an idealist, and probably was naive and maybe not understanding enough of what he was getting himself into ... that he could be arrested," she said.

The Cuban government did not respond to requests for comment, but officials have said previously that Gross' case is pending, and that there is nothing unusual about the long period he has spent in jail without being charged. □

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Wednesday & Thursday Tournament starts at 6.30 p.m.	Buy in: \$25 for 800 chips	Rebuys: \$26 for 1200 chips	Add-on: \$32 for 3000 chips
	Bad Beat Promotions: 4 of a kind \$50, Straight flush \$100, Royal Flush \$200 Bad Beat Jackpot: \$15,000 Aces full of tens beaten by a 4 of a kind or better Two card in hand must play and you have to go to the river		
Friday Tournament starts at 7.00 p.m.	Buy in: \$50 for 1500 chips	Rebuys: \$50 for 2500 chips	Add-on: \$55 for 5000 chips
	The add-on can be made before half time only if no chips are left from both rebuys		
Saturday Tournament starts at 7.00 p.m.	Freeze-out Tournament Buy in: \$150 for 5000 chips		
Sunday Tournament starts at 7.00 p.m.	Freeze-out Tournament Buy in: \$100 for 5000 chips		
	Players with a voucher for this tournament have to be present before the end of the third level Satellites will be running starting 4.00 p.m. for \$12		

All tournaments will have ante's

Players are allowed to enter all tournaments until the end of the third level

Management reserves the rights to alter, change or cancel tournaments. And will not be held responsible for any typographical errors of printed material pertaining to these events and players will have no claim in these matters. Management decisions are final





Calling all Boa Hunters!



ORANJESTAD - The Boa Constrictor Taskforce, instated by the Government of Aruba, herewith makes an appeal to one and all to participate at the Boa capturing training events. These instruction events are designed to educate volunteers how to capture Boa constrictors with every day domestic tools such as brooms, gardening gloves and trash bags. The first national Boa constrictor capturing event will take place on December 12th, 2010. More information will be released shortly as to this event. The instruction evenings are scheduled for:

Saturday, December 4th, 2010, from 6 PM to 7 PM at the Centro di Bario Playa Pabao.

Tuesday, December 7th, 2010, from 8 PM to 9 PM at the Centro di Bario Piedra Plat.

Thursday, December 9th, 2010, from 8 PM to 9 PM at the Centro di Bario Savaneta.

During these instruction events, volunteers will be trained how to capture the Boas as well as how to prepare for the actual capturing event. During these instruction sessions, information will also be given as to the locations where the national capturing event will take place. The Taskforce is counting on a large group of volunteers to give a hand to help protect Aruba's fauna. You can help make a difference with this very serious challenge. We thank you for your cooperation. □

Boa Constrictor task Force takes action



ORANJESTAD - Yesterday a press conference was held to give information to the media regarding the action taken by the Boa Constrictor Task Force. On September 15, 2010, Minister of Integration, Infrastructure and Environment, Mr. Benny Sevinger, received the report entitled "An Aruba without Trupial, Prikichi, Patrishi and Shoco? The need for a Boa Control Program."

The report was written by Diego Marquez of Parke Arikok Nacional and Greg Peterson president of Aruba Birdlife Conservation. During a meeting held with Minister Sevinger end of August, he requested Marquez and Peterson to compile this document and present it to him as soon as possible. The report describes

the exponential growth of the number of boas, the invasive predator in Aruba's wildlife and recommends a two-fold approach to the challenging situation. On the one hand, the boa challenge should become part of a national invasive exotics policy and a government department should be made responsible for the development and implementation of such policy.

But this course of action takes time. On the other hand, the authors propose to establish a Boa Control Program Task Force, which will carry out two activities before the end of 2010. The proposition entails that a jump-start be made by means of a boa culling activity, to be carried out by a combined effort of professionals and volunteers.

Boas would have to be caught through visual detection in order to start reducing their numbers. This culling activity is not an activity on its own, rather a means to achieve a greater objective, namely to protect and conserve Aruba's endemic fauna from extinction. The second activity to be carried out before the end of 2010 is a national bird count. The proposed yearly bird count will be used to monitor trends in bird species numbers.

The authors informed the minister of the urgency to act and emphasized that participation of the Government in tackling the invasive species challenges in general and of the Boa constrictor in particular, was desired and very much needed. □

Zwerver plays "with" not for the audience

PALM BEACH - Peter Zwerver is pianist, singer and is now entertaining at Sopranos Piano Bar in the Arawak Gardens in Palm Beach. He has experience in piano bars all over the world. Making contact directly with the people is one of his specialties. He doesn't play for the audience, but with the audience. So there always will be enough time to request songs. Singing together with him is encouraged! His array of music is so big that everyone will hear their favorite songs.

Because of his experience with audience of different countries and nationalities, he is fluent in both English and Dutch.

Sopranos clubby environs feature a refreshingly informal, open – aire nightclub where tourists are just as welcomed as the crowds of regulars to ham it up, off – key with a talented piano man. Whether you have an ear for jazz, a liking to Frank Sinatra or Elton John, the impressive pianist takes requests from an all ages clientele and happy socializers late into the night. □



Salt & Pepper introduces new bartender



PALM BEACH - Everybody knows Salt & Pepper, the cozy bar and restaurant in the hart of the High Rise hotels. The place

where you feel at home, where you come for a nice talk and a tasty bite and where the staff is always happy. Among this happy

staff is a new crewmember, named Johan. He is new on the island and the new face behind the bar of Salt & Pepper. He is a blond



Dutchman so you can't miss him! That's all the information you will get about him for now, come to Salt & Pepper and check him out. Ask Johan anything you like to know about him and his experiences on Aruba (he likes to talk). Johan is more an evening

person and that's why you can find him behind the bar from Tuesday till Saturday evening. Sunday mornings he is there to make you a nice Spicy Bloody Mary and healthy freshly squeezed orange juice. Come for the Johan experience to Salt & Pepper! ☐



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- 5 PM - 6 PM Flamenco singer "Angela Croes"

For individual store/restaurants specials see back side folder

Crystal & Seaport Casinos

- 2 PM - 10 PM Double points at both casinos
- 1 PM - 3 PM Island Xtravaganza Bingo at Seaport Casino
- 4 PM - 8 PM Spices band at Crystal Casino
- 4 PM - 8 PM Caha di Orgel Bucurui at Seaport Casino
- 2 PM - 7 PM Afl. 100,- winner every hour at a random machines at both casinos

Renaissance Marketplace

- 10 AM - 11 AM Zumba Kick off
- 10 AM - 8 PM Kids Entertainment: Dino Jump, Trampoline, Wall painting, Face painting, Arts & Crafts,
- 10 AM - 8 PM Sint & Piet show
- 11 AM - 11:30 AM Zumba for kids
- 11 AM - 2 PM Steelband - A Touch of Steel
- 11 AM - 8 PM Island Extravaganza Train
- 2 PM - 6 PM local DJ
- 2 PM - 5 PM Karaoke contest at Grand Café Tropical
- 2 PM - 3 PM Carnival show with TBS Brass band
- 4 PM - 6 PM The Next Top Dog ①
- 5 PM - 7 PM Grupo di Betico ②
- 5:30 PM Kids Raffle**
- 7 PM - 11 PM Orkesta Hubenil di Korsou ③

For individual store specials see back side folder

Festival Plaza

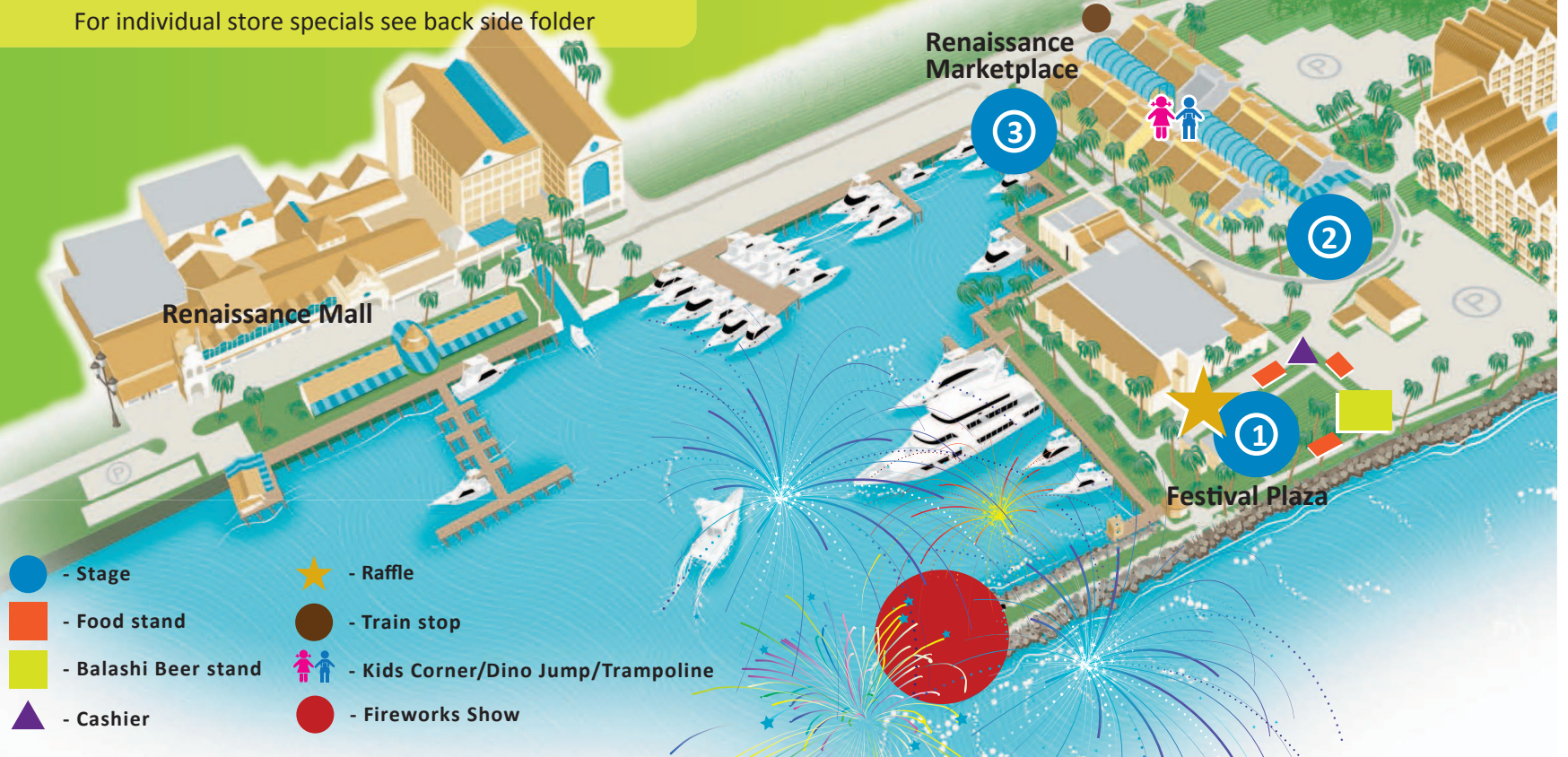
- 5 PM - 10 PM Balashi Beerwagon
- 5 PM - 10 PM F&B Stands
- 7 PM - 10 PM Tsunami ①
- 9 PM - 9:30 PM Island Xtravaganza Raffle**
- 10 PM Fireworks show ●

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Island Guests keep coming back for more for Fishes & More



PALM BEACH - Pictured are guests from the USA enjoying an evening at Fishes & More. Rick and Amy Mc Donell from Hudson, NH on their 21st Visit to Aruba. Al Capodagli, Andy Adam, Julieanne Singer and Rita Singer say Fishes and More is one of the best kept secrets on the island, great food and service. Val Stunja , Sue Webersinn from Pittsburgh,

PA. Carl and Eileem Solden from Northwood, N.H. Charlie and Carol Smith from Virginia. Barbara and Frank from New Hampshire and Washington DC. Fishes & More specializes in fresh fish and seafood, and at the same time pleases the non-fish lovers as well. All the dishes are prepared a la minute by an internationally experienced kitchen team, which

gives the twist to our dishes. Influences from all over the world are found back on the menu and they are already well known for their daily changing specials. Ideally located in front of the Occidental Resort (Former Allegro), they are visited both by individuals and families alike, as they highlight a kids menu also. □

Café The Plaza's Quiz Night series

Bier Hier is the unrivalled champion



ORANJESTAD - Bier Hier is once again the unrivalled champion of Café the Plaza's Quiz Night series, an 8-week long challenge for teams.

Mind boggling questions had participants rack their brains week after week, and every time Bier Hier came first. Well, not every



time, as twice the Celaire brothers, Patrick Brown and their ladies had to bow low for visiting super quiz star Koen van der Elsen from Holland, whose knowledge is almost legendary. Bier Hier's closest competitors were Synergy and the Corner Girls, who came second and third respectively. The Academics, Eureka and the Power Ladies made up the rest of the top teams.

Strangely enough, Bier Hier did not choose the three cases of Balashi beer that were among the three prizes the winners could choose from.

No, they took the goodie bags from Pepia Est, which were filled with great items. The gift certificate of Salt and Pepper Restaurant went to third place winners the Corner Girls.

Last Tuesday was the final night of the October/November quiz series.

The results (1. Bier Hier, 2. Corner Girls, 3. Academics, 4. Eureka, 5. Synergy) just affirmed the standings. Quiz master Evert Bongers thanked all the participants and congratulated the winners at the end of the fun evening at Café the Plaza in the Renaissance Marketplace; he also announced that the new



series quiz nights for teams will start on Tuesday, January 4. Photos show quizzers in action and the winning team Bier Hier. □



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	International Editor Richard Brooks
	Sales Team Elly Erasmus Mareijke Croes Wendy Kelkboom
	Page Designer Dina Maria
	Advertising Coordinator Sandra Loefstop-Duarte aviso@bondia.com bondia.aruba@gmail.com

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HUMAN HINTS

Develop Compassion

To become enlightened is to become aware of your self. The more we can see our selves, the more we come to understand our relation to the illusion. Understanding how we relate to the illusion is to understand our reactions and motivations.

We don't want to see our selves because when we do, we become consciously responsible for our selves. It is easy to not take responsibility for our selves if we remain blind to our own behavior. It's easy to hurt others and our selves if we pretend to not notice.

As soon as we consciously realize what we do to others and our selves, we tend to justify it. Most of the time, when we hurt others, we do so with a genuine belief that we're acting in everyone's better interest. We possess an amazing ability to justify our own thoughts, feelings and actions. I would even say that in order to act in any way, we must first justify the action. We cannot do anything we don't first justify to our selves.

As we evolve, we will learn to see the bigger picture and develop compassion for others. As we evolve and grow, we begin to understand that we affect everyone we come in contact with, and even those we don't. Embracing the true extent of what this means can be terrifying. As we evolve, we will become a gentle, compassionate race of beings.

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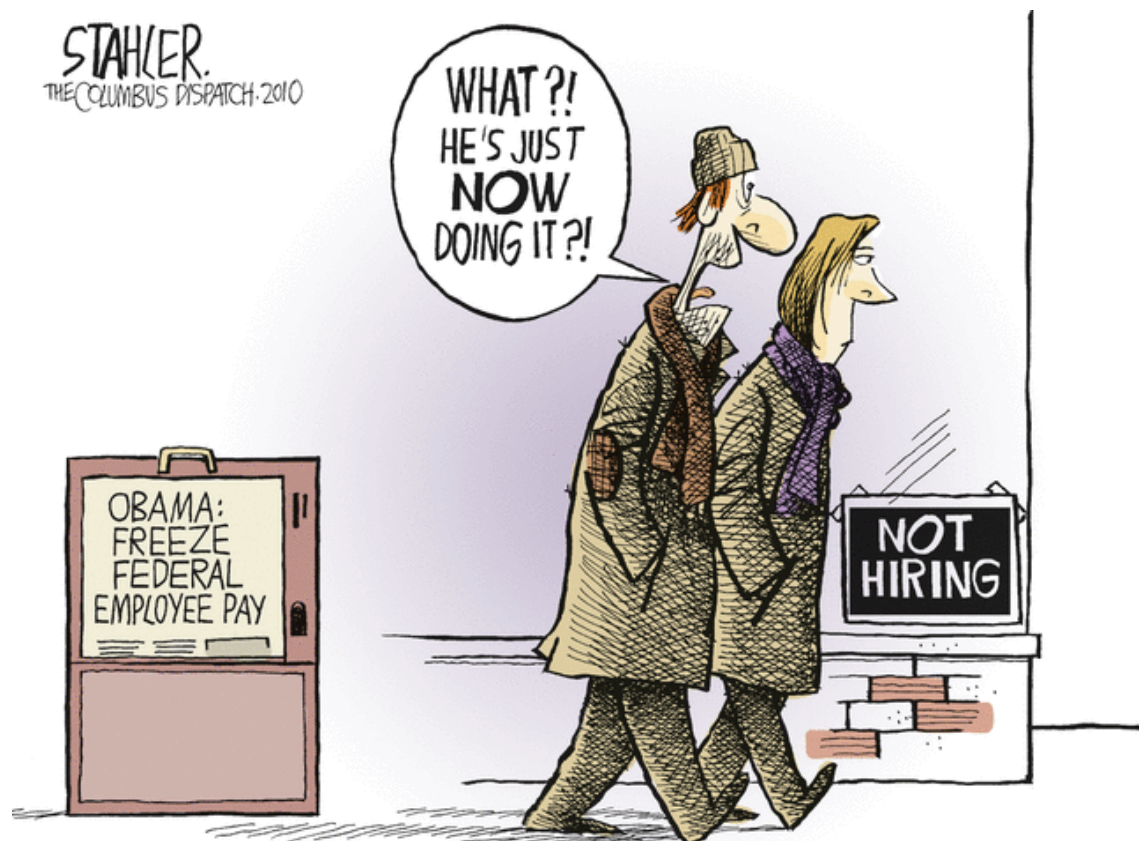
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~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has studied many avenues of alternative thought. HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you chose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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Media see WikiLeaks cables as security porn. They don't get it. Nor does Obama.

By Danielle Pletka

Washington – For the moment, the WikiLeaks scandal is all sound and fury – details about the site's fugitive founder Julian Assange, snippets of cables eagerly deciphered by a prurient press. The Obama administration is in a damage control frenzy as much of the world looks on, aghast that an alleged rapist has managed to tie the world's greatest power in knots.

But while Interpol seeks Mr. Assange and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton barnstorms on her embarrassing world tour, we hear little to nothing of the origins of this maelstrom. PFC Bradley Manning allegedly stole a quarter of a million cables over time, passing them to Assange in the name of transparency. Private Manning is now in custody in the Marine Corps Brig at Quantico, Va., awaiting trial.

Related: The Monitor's complete WikiLeaks coverage

Who else is responsible? Senator John McCain has demanded that Manning's superiors be investigated and disciplined, but most politicians have focused on Assange, demanding he be tried for treason, hunted down, and possibly even killed.

But what of the U.S. government? Should there not be consequences for a failure of this kind? Is there no chain of command in the military, and does every private first class have access to some of the most confidential musings of our national leaders? Who was Manning's supervisor when the leak happened? Where was the internal monitoring system keeping track of unusual downloads? Is this Private alone responsible for the WikiLeaks scandal?

For another view: WikiLeaks: Bradley Manning isn't a criminal. He's a hero.

These are serious questions, yet they are a matter of apparent indifference to the Obama administration, which has focused attention almost exclusively on adjusting its skirts while doing the international walk of shame. Security procedures have been tweaked and hatches are reportedly being battened down, but heads are not rolling. Apparently, it's enough that we close the barn door and hope that no other horses get

away.

Perceptions at home and abroad Overseas, this lack of command and control within the US government is an object of concern for our allies and a source of conspiracy theorizing among our enemies. Friends view the scandal as just the latest sign of American weakness, of a piece with a president whose policies appear less and less consequential in addressing the threats we face. They question the reliability and seriousness of their putative ally in Washington. Perversely, enemies like Iran are persuaded still of American might, and cannot conceive that incompetence is at the root of the largest leak in decades, if not ever.

And what of the perception at home? The State Department cables WikiLeaks published reveal an Obama administration that:

- Worries North Korea is transferring missiles to Iran, but ignores the misbehavior of the former and seeks rapprochement with the latter nonetheless.

- Bemoans the evanescence of democracy in Russia and the thuggery of its de facto leader while assuring the US Senate of Moscow's bona fides as a trustworthy signatory to the New START treaty.

- Frets about nuclear security in Pakistan while assuring the public of the stability of the Pakistani state.

Continues to treat China as a responsible stakeholder in the face of actions that show it to be anything but.

Incompetence and hypocrisy The specter of hypocrisy will be hard to shake off.

Related: 'We cannot deal with these people': WikiLeaks shows true feelings on Guantánamo

There is an element of pornography to this entire episode, and the dirty pictures are all still on full display, distracting many from examining the implications of this case in whole. But once the titillating information is digested, and Assange is apprehended, both the world and the American people will be left with a sense that the man in the White House is serious neither about his responsibilities abroad nor competent governance at home. □

ISRAEL

Continued from Front Page

Fire officials said the blaze torched some 1,600 acres. A university, three prisons and a hospital were evacuated and at least one village was destroyed. Police said 12,000 people were evacuated from their homes.

Netanyahu said the government was using all means at its disposal to contain the blaze, and he appealed for help from abroad.

His office said Greece, Spain and Cyprus agreed to send firefighting helicopters, and additional aid was coming from Britain, Russia, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Romania, Jordan and Bulgaria.

Netanyahu's office said Turkey was offering assistance, in a positive gesture after months of tensions. Once close allies, Israel-Turkish relations have been in a crisis since Israel's bloody attack May 31 on a Turkish flotilla trying to break Israel's blockade on Gaza.

Israel's appeal was a rare call for international assistance. Israel is better known for sending its own rescue teams and medical personnel to other countries to help in their disaster relief efforts.

After nightfall, Netanyahu flew over the scene of the fire to inspect the damage. At the firefighters' command post, he said the blaze was of "international proportions,"

and the arrival of equipment from abroad on Friday could be decisive, but they could not work at night.

Netanyahu called a special Cabinet meeting for Friday morning to assess the situation and make decisions if necessary.

The fire broke out around midday and quickly spread, fanned by uncharacteristic hot and dry conditions at this time of year. Israel experienced an exceptionally hot summer and has had little rain during the normally wet autumn and winter season.

The fire heavily damaged one of Israel's few large forests, made up of natural growth and planted areas, a favorite spot for camping, hiking and picnics. A nature reserve provided a refuge for dozens of species of wildlife.

Forestry workers tried to evacuate animals from the inferno.

The forest recovered slowly from a fire in 1989, but experts said Thursday's blaze was many times worse. Defense Minister Ehud Barak ordered the military to make all its resources available to help put out the fire and to rescue the victims, according to a statement from his office. The military said it sent soldiers and equipment to the site of the fire, including helicopters, huge bulldozers, medics and army units to help with evacuation of victims.

After sundown, evacuation



Firefighters extinguish an extensive fire in Tirat Hacarmel, northern Israel, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010. A massive forest fire that scorched part of northern Israel killed scores of people Thursday, officials said. Fire officials said the blaze, which torched some 800 acres, remained out of control as nightfall arrived.

Associated Press

orders were issued for several communities, a neighborhood of Haifa, Israel's third largest city, and a third prison. Haifa University, at the edge of the stricken Carmel nature preserve, was evacuated, the university said in a statement. Kibbutz Bet Oren, a collective village in the wooded area, burned to the ground after its residents were evacuated, witnesses said. The military emptied one of its prisons near the fire area, a psychiatric hospital was evacuated and a nature resort in the middle

of the forest sent all its guests home.

Yaron Zamir, a spokesman for the national prison service, said the men were prison workers brought in as reinforcements from central Israel to assist in the rescue. He called it a "difficult, sad and incomprehensible day." Police said the commander of the Haifa police station, who was driving behind the bus, was critically burned.

Eli Bin, a spokesman for the Magen David Adom rescue service, said three bus passengers were evacuated to hospitals, two in serious

condition and one with minor injuries.

Israel's president, Shimon Peres, expressed sorrow for the loss of life and praised the firefighters trying to contain the blaze.

"They exemplify personal and superior bravery and we are praying for a miracle," Peres said in a ceremony marking the Hanukkah holiday. "We pray for their safety. We pray for the cessation of the fire."

Peres' office said he later spoke to the Palestinian prime minister, Salam Fayyad, who offered condolences. □

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Ivory Coast opposition leader named winner of vote



Opposition leader Alassane Ouattara, center, celebrates after the electoral commission head announced his victory in last Sunday's presidential run-off, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010. A senior advisor to Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo has described the announcement of results by the country's electoral commission showing a victory for the opposition as "an attempted coup."

Associated Press

MARCO CHOWN OVED

Associated Press

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP)

— The head of Ivory Coast's electoral commission on Thursday declared opposition leader Alassane Ouattara the winner of the West African country's contested presidential election in comments that were not broadcast on state TV, before ruling party loyalists called the announcement an 'attempted coup' and took to the airwaves to denounce them as unofficial.

Election commission chief Youssouf Bakayoko said Ouattara had won with 54.1 percent of the vote, compared to 45.9 percent for incumbent Laurent Gbagbo after days of backroom wrangling during which the ruling party had physically prevented other commission members from announcing the outcome of the vote. Bakayoko left the commission's headquarters unannounced and slipped into the fancy Golf Hotel, where he made the announcement.

The hotel then replayed his declaration on the large speakers on the hotel's lawn, blasting the news as crowds gathered and opposition supporters began running through the streets in celebration.

The race is far from over because the victory must be validated by the country's constitutional council, which is led by ruling party loyalist Paul Yao N'Dre. N'Dre appeared on state-controlled television where he said that the electoral body's results were not valid because the commission had missed a constitutionally mandated midnight deadline on

Wednesday.

"Only the constitutional council is qualified to give the results of this election," he said in the broadcast. "There are some foreign TV channels amusing themselves giving results. Ivoirians should consider these results null and void." Soon after two separate decrees read on state TV announced that all foreign radio and TV broadcasts are being banned indefinitely and that the country's air, land and maritime borders had been closed.

The development heightens uncertainty and casts a shadow over the country's first election in 10 years which was meant to restore stability after political infighting plunged it into civil war in 2002. The international community scrambled to appease the situation, with the White House releasing a strongly-worded statement asking the parties to accept the election commission's results. "Those provisional results have declared Alassane Ouattara the winner over incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo," the statement released late Thursday said. "Credible, accredited electoral observers have characterized the balloting as free and fair, and no party should be allowed to obstruct further the electoral process."

The conflict officially ended in 2003, but the country was severed in two, with a government-controlled south led by Gbagbo and the north, where Ouattara comes from, in rebel hands.

The continuous delay of the election by Gbagbo whose term expired in 2005 and who claimed the election was impossible due to the

war, destroyed the economy of the world's top cocoa producer, sending foreign investors packing, emptying out what was once one of Africa's chicest destinations sporting skyscrapers, gourmet restaurants and lagoon-facing boulevards. Reached by telephone Thursday, one of Gbagbo's senior advisers, Richard Assamoa, called the release of results "an attempted coup d'etat."

Supporters of Gbagbo had prevented the election commission from announcing the outcome from Sunday's runoff, saying tallies from at least four of the country's 19 regions should be canceled because of irregularities. When a spokesman for the commission attempted to hold a press conference to announce partial results, officials loyal to Gbagbo stepped in front of the cameras and ripped the results out of his hand, blocking him from reading them.

In a press conference immediately after the announcement of his victory, the 68-year-old Ouattara called on his opponent to respect the outcome.

"I remind my brother Laurent Gbagbo of our mutual engagement to respect the results proclaimed by the independent electoral commission," he said. "I'm proud of my country which has resolutely chosen democracy today and I hope this leads to a durable peace in Ivory Coast." Authorities said Thursday that police responding to a call at one of Ouattara's offices had killed four people after being fired upon. The opposition coalition denied any weapons were on the premises and said the attackers fired first. □



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Clinton: U.S. will consider keeping Kyrgyzstan base

ROBERT BURNS

AP National Security Writer

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan (AP) — The United States will reconsider its military presence in the Central Asian nation of Kyrgyzstan once it winds down its combat mission in Afghanistan in 2014, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Thursday.

She offered no indication whether the Obama administration hopes to maintain a presence at the Manas air base, which plays a central role in moving troops and supplies to support the war effort in Afghanistan. Russia has objected to having the U.S. military set up so close to its borders.

Speaking to students and civic leaders in a Kyrgyz TV interview, Clinton noted that the U.S. and its NATO partners agreed last month in Lisbon, Portugal, to begin turning over control to local Afghan authorities in 2011, with a goal of completing that transition by the end of 2014. “Then we will look to see if there is any continuing mission” for U.S. troops at

Manas, she said.

Later, in a pep talk to American troops at Manas, Clinton said, “You’re not going to be here indefinitely.”

The U.S. has used Manas as a major transit point since the Afghan war began in 2001. The base has been a sore subject with regional giant Russia. It has also been the source of tension in U.S.-Kyrgyz relations, in part because of Kyrgyz suspicion of corruption in contracts for supplying the air base with fuel.

Clinton said Thursday that the U.S. has agreed to include a Kyrgyz firm in the contracting for fuel supplied to Manas.

At a news conference with current President Roza Otunbayeva, Clinton said the U.S. will help set up a Kyrgyz entity that would bid for a portion of the lucrative fuel supply contracts.

Those contracts were held by companies that authorities suspected of links with the family of the Kyrgyz president overthrown earlier this year. President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was unseated amid bloody public street protests

over festering living standards and perceived corruption.

The two companies involved — Red Star Enterprises and Mina Corp, both based in Gibraltar — have denied any ties to the Bakiyev family.

Later, Clinton flew to neighboring Uzbekistan, where she met with President Islam Karimov and urged him to take action to ensure human rights and freedom.

Before leaving Bishkek, she told reporters that she would raise U.S. concerns about Uzbekistan’s human rights record, as well as its willingness to allow some U.S. war supplies to transit into Afghanistan.

Clinton seemed to anticipate that her human rights pitch might not resonate with Karimov.

“Sometimes countries are willing to work with us to improve their human rights profile, to support democratic development, and sometimes it’s a harder case to make,” she said. “I’m well aware of the many challenges existing in Uzbekistan.”

Clinton was meeting privately with human rights activists



U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton meets with Kyrgyzstan’s President Roza Otunbayeva, right, in Bishkek, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010. The United States will reconsider its military presence in the Central Asian nation of Kyrgyzstan once it winds down its combat mission in Afghanistan in 2014, Clinton said Thursday.

Associated Press

and religious and civic leaders in Tashkent. According to her prepared remarks, she was to tell them that the U.S. always raises human rights issues with Uzbek government leaders.

“No country has a monopoly on wisdom in this area, including the United States,” she said in the prepared text. “So, when we speak to your government about issues such as religious and media freedom, torture, or child labor, we do so in a spirit of

mutual respect.”

Clinton also signed a U.S.-Uzbek cooperation agreement that enables arrangements in which the two governments and U.S. and Uzbek institutes, universities, research centers, and private companies can cooperate on science and technology.

Later she was flying to Manama, Bahrain, where she was scheduled to attend an international security conference Friday. □

Thieves in Spain rob art truck, including Picasso

CIARAN GILES

Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Three hooded thieves stole a truck containing 28 pieces of art including works by Picasso, Colombian artist Fernando Botero and Spanish sculptor Eduardo Chillida, Spanish police said Thursday.

A police statement said the truck was taken from a warehouse near the town of Getafe on Madrid’s southern outskirts last Saturday. Officers went to the warehouse after an alarm sounded and found the door of the building had been forced open. On arrival, the owner told police that the truck was missing.

A police official said security camera recordings showed the robbery was carried out by three hooded persons and that the keys had been left inside the truck. He said the truck was not armored.

The official spoke condition of anonymity in line with department rules.

Police found the vehicle empty Tuesday in the nearby area of Alcorcon, southwest of the capital.

The police statement said the stolen work included pieces by Picasso, Botero,

Chillida, as well as by Spanish artists Gonzalo Gonzalez, Julio Gonzalez and Antonio Saura and Slovenia’s Cveto Marsic.

Police provided no details of the works but El Mundo daily and other media said it included a Picasso drawing, and paintings, lithographs and sculptures from the other artists.

Police estimated the value of the work to be €2.7 million. Spanish news reports placed the value at €5 million (\$6.6 million), adding that several of the pieces were not insured. The works belonged to six galleries in Madrid, Barcelona and Cologne, Germany. They had just come back from being on exhibit in Germany.

Crisostomo, the Spanish transport company responsible for the vehicle, declined to comment on the theft.

David Fernandez director of the Juan Gris gallery in Madrid said they had a sculpture and a collage by Chillida stolen in the theft. “It gave us a big fright because nothing like this has ever happened to us,” he told Spanish National Radio. “We’re upset because they are important pieces and irreplaceable.” □

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U.S. misses out on intl sport yet again

By NANCY ARMOUR and RONALD BLUM

AP Sports Writers

First the Olympics, now World Cup. When it comes to landing sports' biggest events, the United States can't win. Still smarting from Chicago's snub in the 2016 Olympics race last year, the U.S. was passed over for the 2022 World Cup on Thursday.

While the U.S. had the best financial bid, according to FIFA's analysis, and ready-built stadiums to host the tournament, the tiny desert nation of Qatar won 14-8 in the final round of secret voting by the executive committee of soccer's governing body.

"I don't know that the sports community looks at the process for the 2016 Chicago bid as being carefully planned and well executed. I don't believe that anyone would really look back at this process and believe that we did anything wrong," Major League Soccer Commissioner Don Garber said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press from the FIFA vote in Zurich. "It could just be there's not enough support for bringing these kinds of events to our shores as there might have been decades ago," he said. "Perhaps our market is developed enough — it doesn't require these events. But perhaps the reputation of our country is such that we're not able to win the support of many other countries that are making these decisions that don't believe we need or deserve these large international tournaments."

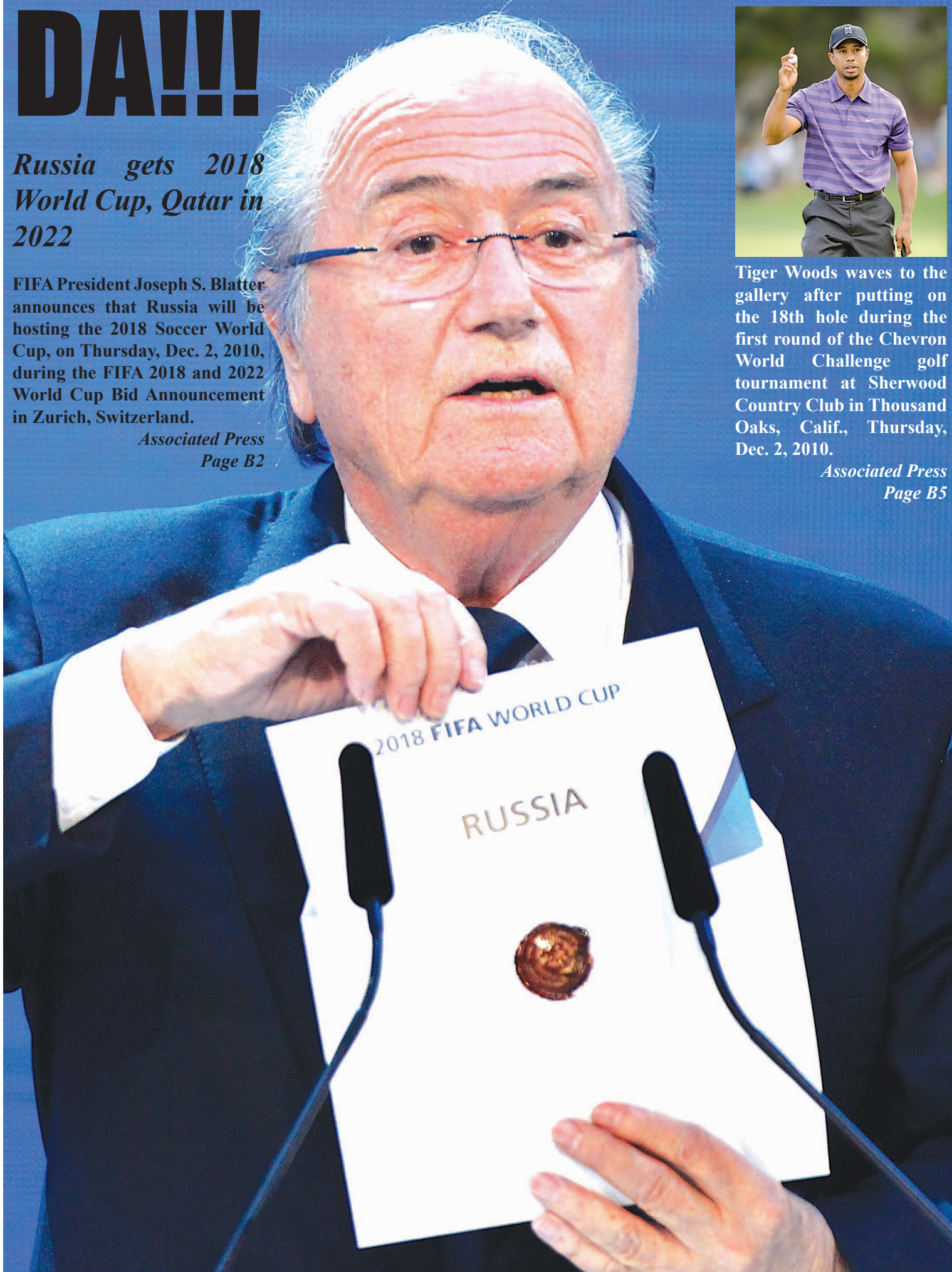
Continued on Page B8

DA!!!

Russia gets 2018 World Cup, Qatar in 2022

FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter announces that Russia will be hosting the 2018 Soccer World Cup, on Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010, during the FIFA 2018 and 2022 World Cup Bid Announcement in Zurich, Switzerland.

Associated Press
Page B2



BACK IN FRONT



Tiger Woods waves to the gallery after putting on the 18th hole during the first round of the Chevron World Challenge golf tournament at Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks, Calif., Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010.

Associated Press
Page B5

U.S. LPGA Tour Championship: Yang, Lee share lead

Page B6

Russia will host World Cup in 2018, Qatar in 2022

JOHN LEICESTER

AP Sports Writer

ZURICH (AP) — Picture football fans partying where tanks and missiles paraded on Red Square in the Cold War's darkest days. Imagine high-tech air-conditioned stadiums chilled so players and spectators don't keel over in the sweltering desert heat of the Middle East.

For all the allegations of corruption and rigged voting that have been leveled lately against FIFA, the much-maligned governing body of football certainly has a taste for adventure.

In taking the World Cup to the uncharted lands of Russia in 2018 and tiny but oil-wealthy Qatar in 2022, FIFA — like the International Olympic Committee — is leading the charge for the argument that sports can reshape history and influence the destinies and the way people and nations are seen by the rest of the world. FIFA could have played it safe by going to the sport's motherland of England or to the ready-built stadiums of the United States. Both promised minimal worry and lots of cash. But the desire of FIFA's all-powerful, 74-year-old president, Sepp Blatter, to carry football and its considerable influence to promising and largely untapped markets won the day.

"We go to new lands," said



FIFA President Joseph Blatter is flanked by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov, right, and Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar, after the announcement that Russia will be the host country for the soccer World Cup 2018 and Qatar the host for the tournament in 2022 in Zurich, Switzerland, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010.

Blatter, who next June will seek another four-year presidential term.

In doing so, FIFA is marching in lockstep with the Olympics, which went to China for the first time in 2008, celebrating the U-turn over one generation from Maoism to frontier capitalism in the world's most populous country. The IOC is now preparing for the first Olympics in South America, in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, rewarding Brazil's emergence as a major power. FIFA, meanwhile, is still basking in the praise it won for taking the World Cup to Africa for the first time in June, where vuvuzela-

blowing black and white South Africans demonstrated how far they have moved on from apartheid.

Russia and Qatar are not without risk for FIFA — although with reserves of \$1 billion and the sport wealthier and more popular than ever, it can afford a gamble or two.

In awarding two World Cups at the same time, FIFA aims to give itself more stable and long-term revenues from the tournament that underpins its wealth. It also means Blatter's influence will outlive his presidency. But it also leaves him and the 21 other VIPs on FIFA's executive committee open to suspicions that bidding nations might have colluded to secure their votes. The committee members voted behind closed doors and were furiously lobbied by statesmen, sheiks, sports stars and Britain's Prince William, who tossed in a joke about his upcoming wedding.

Russia, already spending massively on the Sochi Winter Olympics it will host in 2014, now has the added and greater challenge of readying airports, modern stadiums, trains and other public works it will need not only to host 32 football teams and millions of visitors but also to transport them efficiently from cities spread from the Baltic Sea in the west

to the Ural Mountains that form the European boundary with Asia.

This will mark the first time the world's largest country, or even Eastern Europe, has organized a World Cup, a fact its team of lobbyists used to tweak FIFA voters' consciences.

Qatar, with a population of 841,000, has not only never hosted a World Cup but not even played in one. FIFA inspectors who toured the country, which is half the size of Israel, cautioned that the intense heat in summer, when the tournament will be played, posed a potential health risk for players and fans.

Qatar allayed the fears of some — but not all — FIFA voters by promising that stadiums, training venues and areas for fans to party will be cooled with solar-powered air conditioning. But it has yet to be proven that the technology will work on such a broad scale, which prompted the American on FIFA's committee, Chuck Blazer, to quip: "I don't see how you can air-condition an entire country."

But star U.S. player Landon Donovan expects Qatar's heat-beating technology to work.

"I grew up in the desert, in California, and running in 100-degree heat was miserable

and at times dangerous," he said. "I'm sure it's not cheap, the technology to do that, but I can't imagine after all they put into this bid that they are not going to follow through and make sure that the World Cup is run very well."

At malls in Doha, people gathered at electronic shops to watch the voting on television. With other 2022 bidders Australia, Japan and South Korea eliminated in earlier rounds, Qatar beat the United States in the final vote 14-8. There were roars when Blatter pulled "Qatar" out of the envelope. Qataris and others — including workers from south Asia — immediately started dancing in the streets along Doha's Gulf waterfront, some blowing vuvuzelas that provided the droning soundtrack to South Africa's World Cup.

Qatar is promising to spend \$50 billion on infrastructure upgrades and \$4 billion to build nine stadiums and renovate three others. It also is promising more sports for women — in contrast to the hostility shown to female athletes in neighboring Saudi Arabia.

The Qatari bid chairman, Sheik Mohammed bin Hamad Al-Thani, said he hopes its World Cup can change the "wrong perception" that women are oppressed in the Middle East.

Russia comfortably beat England and joint bids from Spain-Portugal and Belgium-Netherlands for 2018. Russia Prime Minister Vladimir Putin immediately hopped on a plane to Zurich, having earlier opted not to join the last-minute lobbying efforts. Putin had said he didn't want to pressure FIFA's committee members, who, ahead of their vote, faced intense media scrutiny about alleged corruption and vote-trading. FIFA suspended two committee members for ethics rule-violations, leaving 22 voters. Putin may have won some over in taking their side against what he called a "clear" smear campaign. □

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NCAA president responds to Newton backlash

By JOHN ZENOR

AP Sports Writer

NCAA President Mark Emmert responded Thursday to the backlash that the governing body is allowing Cam Newton to play in the SEC championship game even though his father sought payment for his services.

"We recognize that many people are outraged at the notion that a parent or anyone else could 'shop around' a student-athlete and there would possibly not be repercussions on the student-athlete's eligibility," Emmert said in a statement on the NCAA's web site. Emmert added that he's committed to "further clarifying and strengthening our recruiting and amateurism rules so they promote appropriate behavior by students, parents, coaches and third parties." He also said the NCAA will "work aggressively with our members to amend our bylaws so that this type of behavior is not a part of intercollegiate athletics."

The NCAA ruled Wednesday that the Heisman favorite was unaware of the pay-for-play scheme concocted by his father, Cecil, and the owner of a scouting service. The NCAA declared Newton eligible to play for second-ranked Auburn Saturday against No. 18 South Carolina.

Cecil Newton and Kenny Rogers — the former Mississippi State player who

worked for an agent — sought money for the quarterback to play for the Bulldogs.

George Lawson, the Newton family attorney, said Thursday that Cecil Newton cooperated with the NCAA.

"Cam's father participated in the investigation truthfully and honestly in terms of what he knew and what he didn't know, regardless of the consequences," Lawson told WSB-TV in Atlanta.

As to whether any money changed hands, the attorney said: "Absolutely not."

Lawson added that he "would hope" the investigation is over. "But if it is not at an end, Cam and his family will continue to participate," he said.

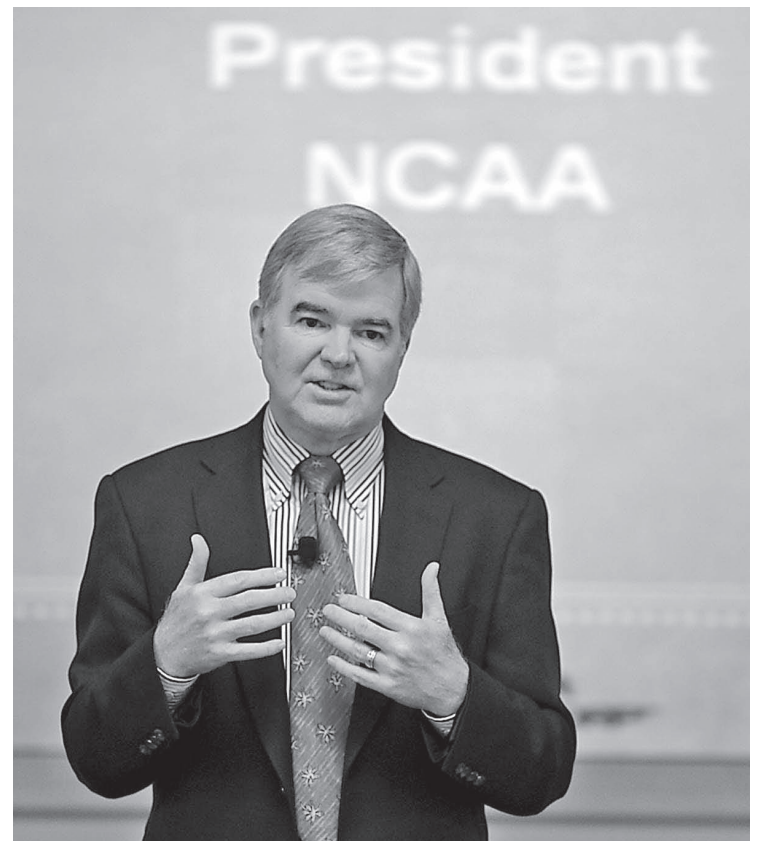
Within the span of two days, the NCAA notified Auburn of violations of amateurism rules, the school declared Newton ineligible, and then the governing body reinstated him, clearing Newton to compete without conditions. The NCAA noted that reinstatement decisions are separate from the enforcement process and usually are "likely to conclude prior to the close of an investigation."

On its web site Thursday NCAA vice president of enforcement Julie Roe Lach said her staff investigates all types of rules violations.

"Some of these investigations affect student-athlete eligibility and others do not," Lach explained. "The investigation does not

stop with a student-athlete eligibility issue, but school officials must address it as soon as they are aware of the violations."

The NCAA also took issue with comparisons made to the case involving Reggie Bush at Southern California, which was heavily punished for extra benefits received by the Heisman Trophy winner from two aspiring sports marketers. The NCAA said "If a student-athlete does not receive tangible benefits, that is a different situation from a student-athlete or family member who receives cash, housing or other benefits or knowingly competes and is compensated as a professional athlete." Mark Jones, an Indianapolis attorney who works with NCAA-related cases, said the reinstatement committee generally relies on the school's self-report in making decisions involving eligibility issues and doesn't investigate. He said the swift movement on reinstatement is common during an athlete's season. "The student-athlete reinstatement staff's job is to evaluate things from the student-athlete's perspective," said Jones, the chair of collegiate sports practice for Ice Miller. "That's very important in analyzing what they're going to do in terms of whether any sanctions might be necessary for the student-athlete." Kevin Lennon, NCAA vice president of



This Oct. 7, 2010, file photo shows NCAA President Mark Emmert speaking during the Indiana Sports Corporation annual meeting in Indianapolis.

Associated Press

academic and membership affairs, said on the web site that when the reinstatement staff reviews eligibility cases they review each case based on its own merits and specific facts. "During the decision,

we must examine a number of factors, including guidelines established by our membership for what conditions should be applied based on the nature and scope of the violation," Lennon said. □





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Oklahoma City Thunder guard Russell Westbrook, right, drives to the basket past New Jersey Nets guard Jordan Farmar during the second overtime of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2010 in Newark, N.J. The Thunder won 123-120 in triple overtime.

Associated Press

AP source: Yankees up offer to Jeter



In this Sept. 9, 2009, photo, New York Yankees' Derek Jeter stands at first after hitting a single during a baseball game against the Tampa Bay Rays at Yankee Stadium in New York.

Associated Press

By RONALD BLUM

AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK — The New York Yankees increased their contract offer to Derek Jeter. The team informed Jeter's side of the new offer during a telephone conversation early Thursday, a person familiar with the negotiations said. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because no announcement was made.

"The ball's in Derek's

court now, and his agent," Yankees co-chairman Hank Steinbrenner said later Thursday in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. "It's up to them."

Jeter's agent, Casey Close, declined comment. But since negotiations resumed Tuesday, talks have appeared to gain a little momentum. "We don't know how happy they are. We'll see," Steinbrenner said. "There's no possible way anybody could criticize us for what we've offered."

New York opened with a \$45 million, three-year proposal last month, then awaited a formal counteroffer from its captain. It was not known whether the new offer improved the value, contract length or both. Before the sides met this week, their first session since Nov. 8, Close had suggested a contract averaging about \$23 million for four or five seasons. □

Westbrook leads Thunder over Nets 123-120 in 3 OTs

NEWARK, New Jersey (AP) — Russell Westbrook capped a 38-point, 15-rebound performance by scoring all of Oklahoma City's 13 points in the third overtime as the Thunder overcame the absence of an injured Kevin Durant with a 123-120 win against the New Jersey Nets on Wednesday night.

NBA Roundup Jeff Green added a career-high 37 points as the Thunder outlasted New Jersey in a game in which the Nets equalized at the end of regulation on a running 26-foot 3-pointer by Anthony Morrow, then blew leads of six points in the first overtime and three points with 4.6 seconds to go in the second.

Brook Lopez led New Jersey with 28 points and 11 rebounds. Jordan Farmar added a career-high 28 points and nine assists while starting for injured point guard Devin Harris.

Rockets 109, Lakers 99

At Houston, Kevin Martin scored 22 points and Shane Battier added 11 of his 17 in the final three minutes to lift the Rockets over Los Angeles. The loss is the fourth in a row for the Lakers, who were led by Kobe Bryant's 27 points.

Lamar Odom had a season-high 25 points with 11 rebounds and two blocks, but did not score in the fourth quarter. Matt Barnes added 14 points and eight rebounds. Clippers 90, Spurs 85

At Los Angeles, Blake Griffin had 31 points and 13 rebounds, while Eric Gordon added 21 points as Los Angeles ended an 18-game skid against San Antonio.

Baron Davis had seven points and 10 assists in his return from a 10-game injury absence for the Clippers, who have the league's worst record with four wins and 15 losses. They still beat the club with the NBA's best record for the second time in 10 days, following a similarly stunning win over New Orleans late last month.

George Hill scored 17 points and Manu Ginobili added 15

for the Spurs, who dropped to 15-3 with their first road loss of the season after an 8-0 start away from San Antonio. Tim Duncan had just eight points one night after posting a triple-double at Golden State.

Magic 107, Bulls 78

At Chicago, Jameer Nelson scored 24 points as Orlando spoiled the Bulls debut of forward Carlos Boozer.

Boozer played his first game of the season after missing all of Chicago's preseason games plus the first 15 of the regular season after breaking the fifth metatarsal in his right hand in an accident at his home on Oct. 2. Tentative most of the game, he finished with five points and two rebounds in 22 minutes, shooting 2 for 5 from the floor.

Vince Carter scored 22 points for Orlando, Brandon Bass had 17 off the bench and Nelson added nine assists.

Celtics 99, Trail Blazers 95

At Boston, Ray Allen missed his first five 3-point attempts before hitting one with 10.7 seconds left to help the Celtics hold off a late charge by Portland.

It was Boston's fifth straight victory, and the fifth straight loss for Portland.

Paul Pierce scored 28 points, Kevin Garnett had 17 points and eight rebounds, and Rajon Rondo had 10 points and 10 assists as the Celtics built a 96-80 lead, then watched the Blazers score 15 in a row to make it a one-point game with 42 seconds left. Pierce dribbled down the 24-second clock, then fed it to Allen on the left side for the clinching 3.

Heat 97, Pistons 72

At Miami, LeBron James scored 18 points in the final game before he heads back to Cleveland as an opponent, while Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh each added 16 for the Heat.

Miami visits Cleveland on Thursday, James' first trip back to his former arena as an opposing player.

Mavericks 100, Timberwolves 86

At Dallas, Shawn Marion scored 16 points as the Mavericks posted their seventh consecutive victory.

Tyson Chandler had 14 rebounds in the third quarter, setting a Mavericks record for any quarter, and finished with 18 overall. Lorenzo Williams and Popeye Jones shared the previous quarter mark of 12 boards.

J.J. Barea scored 14 points and Jason Terry had 12 as Dallas' backups outscored their counterparts 59-32.

The Mavericks were playing their sixth game in nine nights, and they were able to rest stars Dirk Nowitzki, Jason Kidd and Caron Butler. Nowitzki and Butler had 10 points apiece.

Raptors 127, Wizards 108

At Toronto, DeMar DeRozan scored 20 points while Andrea Bargnani and Sonny Weems each had 18 as Toronto set a season high in points.

Toronto led by as many as 27 and avenged a 109-94 loss at Washington on Nov. 16. The Raptors shot 51 for 88 (58 percent), their highest percentage of the season.

JaVale McGee scored 21 points for the Wizards, who have lost four straight and fell to 0-9 on the road.

Hawks 112, Grizzlies 109

At Atlanta, the Hawks had six players score in double figures, including a season-high 16 points off the bench by Josh Powell, to overcome the loss of Johnson, the team's four-time All-Star and top scorer. The Hawks have won four straight.

In other NBA games it was Atlanta 112, Memphis 109; Oklahoma City 123, New Jersey 120, 3OT; Toronto 127, Washington 108; Boston 99, Portland 95; Miami 97, Detroit 72; Orlando 107, Chicago 78; New Orleans 89, Charlotte 73; Dallas 100, Minnesota 86; Houston 109, L.A. Lakers 99; Denver 105, Milwaukee 94; Utah 110, Indiana 88; and L.A. Clippers 90, San Antonio 85. □

Tiger Woods takes the lead in his tournament

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

THOUSAND OAKS, California (AP) — Tiger Woods opened with a 7-under 65 to take the lead in the Chevron World Challenge on Thursday, only the second time all year his name has been atop the leaderboard.

In one of his most complete rounds of the year, Woods missed only two greens and putted for eagle four times for a one-shot lead over U.S. Open champion Graeme McDowell and Rory McIlroy.

Woods made it all the way until the 18th hole before an old flaw crept into his new swing. He popped up his tee shot, forcing him to pitch out from behind a tree and two-putt from 50 feet to escape with bogey. Even so, he matched his best score of the year, and was atop the leaderboard for only the second time in his troublesome season.

About the only club that didn't cooperate was his new putter, although that's nothing new. If anything has held Woods back from at least having a few chances at contending, it's not making many putts.

Great iron play made up for that at Sherwood Country Club.

"It's not too often you can say I shot 65 and only made one putt, but that's kind of what I did today," Woods said. "I only made one putt and it was on 9. The rest were either two-putts or kick-ins. It was a good ball-striking day."

The putt on the par-4 ninth was from about 15 feet with significant break. Equally impressive were some of his shots into the par 5s, particularly the 3-iron into No. 2. Woods hit it so clean that he twirled the club, a sure sign of a good shot.

He hasn't done much twirling this year.

"I have not," Woods said. "Usually, it's point which way the ball is going to go — incoming somewhere."

McDowell and McIlroy, the Northern Ireland duo who lost only one match at the Ryder Cup, would have been tough to beat in fourballs at Sherwood. They were paired together had would have had a best-ball score of 61. On their own, each settled for a 66. "A lot of birdies out there between us," McDowell said, and that includes a pair of eagles on the par-5 11th.

Dustin Johnson faltered on the back nine and shot a 69, along with Stewart Cink, who is trying out a new putter and a new putting grip with an eye toward 2011. Luke Donald and Camilo Villegas each had a 70, and no one else broke par.

With warm temperatures and a clear sky, the greens were quicker than usual. Sherwood has its share of trouble that is not hard to find, and that accounts for a few high scores. Anthony Kim is bringing up the rear at 79.

This is Woods' last chance to win a tournament in 2010, but it looks more like he is geared toward next season. It was his second straight 65, having closed with that score in the Australian Masters a few weeks ago. This round, however, was different.

In Australia, he made two eagles on the last four holes and played his final six holes in 6-under par for his

65. In his singles match at the Ryder Cup, he played the last seven holes in 7 under.

This time, Woods looked solid from start to ... well, almost the finish.

"It was beautiful, wasn't it?" he said of his tee shot on the 18th.

Woods missed a few shots along the way, making one amazing par on the 12th from behind the green with a flop shot that lipped out. But whenever his swing got loose, he fixed the problem during the round, not on the range the next day.

"It's like what I told you guys earlier in the week, it's a process," he said. "I was putting together streaks of holes earlier — two, three, four, five holes of this — and then I'd lose it for a little bit. Eventually, I needed to get to a full round and then eventually, a full tournament. And today was a full round, so that's a good start."

Woods has won his tournament the last two times he played, missing in 2008 because of knee surgery and last year because of the crisis unfolding in his personal life.

Previous wins have put a ribbon on a great year. This might be different.

"If you play well, it does give you a shot of confidence," Woods said. "I've played well in this event. I've won it a few times, and I've gone on to get off to quick starts the following year. Late in the season, a lot of guys are either traveling,



Tiger Woods lets go of his club as he reacts to his shot on the 18th hole tees during the first round of the Chevron World Challenge golf tournament at Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks, Calif., Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010

Associated Press

not practicing or playing all over the globe. But for me, if I can end the year on a high note, it does give you a shot of confidence going into your practice sessions. Because you know what you were doing was working." Some of his peers took notice, especially seeing him at 8 under with two holes left in his round.

"I heard he had been playing well, although I didn't see

him hit a shot," Cink said. Ian Poulter, who had a 72, offered this on Twitter: "No2 played well today, 7 under par and leading the field at the chevron world event, not far from his best going to take some beating."

That was a tweak at Woods having fallen to No. 2 in the world. The question has always been how long it would stay that way. □

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Yang, Lee share lead at U.S. LPGA Tour Championship

ANTONIO GONZALEZ

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Amy Yang and Seon Hwa Lee each shot a 5-under 67 to share the clubhouse lead when the opening round of the LPGA Tour Championship was called for darkness on Thursday.

Julietta Granada finished two shots back on a chilly day at Grand Cypress Golf Club that had many players wearing earmuffs and winter hats with temperatures dipping into the low 40s F just before dawn. There were four players three shots off the pace.

“I just tried to make par every hole because the fairways, the rough are longer and thicker, and the

greens are fast and slope a lot,” Yang said. “I just tried to play safely.”

It was no surprise there were two South Koreans atop the leaderboard — it just wasn’t the two everybody expected.

Jiyai Shin and Na Yeon Choi are in contention to become the first South Korean to take home the U.S. LPGA’s player of the year award, a huge honor in a golf-crazed country that sent swarms of media to cover them this week. But Shin (77) and Choi (73) each got off to a disappointing start, leaving them well off the pace.

This year’s season-ending event doesn’t have the usual script.

For the first time in a decade, Lorena Ochoa and Annika Sorenstam won’t



Seon Hwa Lee, of South Korea, LEFT, hits a shot from the 15th tee, and her compatriot Amy Yang, right, hits from the first fairway during the first round of the LPGA Tour Championship golf tournament in Orlando, Fla., Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010.

Associated Press

win player of the year now that they’re retired. That leaves five in the field with an opportunity to take home the tour’s top honor and — along with Suzann Pettersen of Norway — perhaps the No. 1 world ranking. So far, none of them has seized the moment. American Cristie Kerr (71), Yani Tseng (75) of Taiwan and Ai Miyazato (80) of Japan — the only others who could win the player of the year award — all struggled in the conditions. Choi was 4 under through 12 holes, but she gave back five shots over the next three holes.

“I don’t think it was one bad

shot,” Choi said. “I feel like I left some shots out there. Luckily, we’re all so close and still have a chance.” Choi and Shin also are the only players in the running for the money title. So far Choi has earned \$1,814,558 for a \$34,790 lead over Shin. The chilly conditions, by Florida standards, made greens firm and fast. But it was the course, a Jack Nicklaus-design that was renovated in 2007-08 with more undulating greens, that really made things difficult. Even some of the more seasoned pros couldn’t believe the course bears Nicklaus’ name.

“He must have been having a very bad day,” quipped Laura Davies, who shot an opening-round 70. “Someone went mental on the greens.” The field doesn’t have much time to make a push. The LPGA Tour Championship is applying the same format it used last season, cutting to the lowest 70 scores and ties after 36 holes and an additional cut after 54 holes to the lowest 30 players and ties. That makes the margin for error even slimmer. “Especially with the cold weather again (on Friday),” Yang said. “Another safe game, yeah. At least I’ll try.” □

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Matinee: sat - sun | Late show: fri & sat

Lochte wins 200 IM at U.S. Short Course Nationals

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Ryan Lochte beat Austrian Olympian Markus Rogan to win the 200-yard individual medley at the U.S. Short Course National Championships on Thursday. Two-time Beijing Olympics gold medalist Lochte came from behind in the 200 IM to defeat Rogan at Ohio State University’s McCorkle Aquatic Pavilion in 1 minute, 42.6 seconds, more than 2 .5 seconds off his American record. Rogan was 1:42.94. The only meet record was set by Hungary’s Katinka Hosszu, who won the women’s 200 IM in 53.47.

Rogan led the 200 IM through the butterfly and backstroke segments before Lochte pulled within 0.34 seconds on the breaststroke and then won with a finishing 24.91 in the freestyle to Rogan’s 25.68.

“I don’t usually swim to get second,” Rogan said. “I was confused because I was ahead at the third (leg) and I expected to be

behind (Lochte).”

Lochte did not expect to be in front early because he wasn’t wearing the half-body suit other swimmers had on.

“I’m only wearing a Speedo,” he said. “I don’t have a suit. I don’t have that natural speed like all the other people do. Of course, I’m going to be behind.”

Lochte clocked 19.78 seconds to finish eighth in the 50 freestyle, which was won by Nathan Adrian in 19.45.

Lochte said he is feeling fatigued from training for the World Championships in Dubai in two weeks.

“I’m still really tired. I’ve been working really hard,” he said. “I had a good start. I missed my wall and I didn’t have a good second 25 (yards) underwater so it messed me up.” He is scheduled to compete in the 100 backstroke on Friday and the 200 backstroke on the final day of competition Saturday. □

Aruba TODAY

JUST SAY NO TO DRUGS

Thomas leads Bruins past Flyers 3-0

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Tim Thomas stopped Scott Hartnell on a second-period penalty shot and finished with 41 saves for his NHL-leading fifth shutout of the season as the Boston Bruins beat the Flyers 3-0 on Wednesday night.

NHL Roundup Thomas, with an NHL-best 1.46 goals-against average and .955 save percentage, helped Boston beat Philadelphia in their first meeting since May when the Flyers rallied from a 3-0 series deficit to edge the Bruins in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Patrice Bergeron, Tyler Seguin and Milan Lucic scored for Boston.

Canucks 7, Flames 2

At Calgary, Mason Raymond had his second career hat trick — scoring at even strength, short-handed and on a power play — and added an assist, leading Vancouver to its third straight victory.

Daniel Sedin, Jeff Tambellini, Alex Burrows and Dan Hamhuis also scored, and Roberto Luongo made 18 saves. The Canucks improved to 13-7-3 and moved a point ahead of Colorado for the Northwest Division lead.

Alex Tanguay and Tim Jackman scored for Calgary. The Flames have lost five of their last seven at home.

Raymond opened the scoring 2 minutes into the first period, and assisted on Tambellini's goal that made it 2-0 at 8:51. Raymond added a short-handed goal at 1:03 of the third to make it 4-2, and completed the hat trick on a power play with 4:23 remaining. He has seven goals in 23 games this season.

Oilers 4, Canadiens 3, OT

At Montreal, Dustin Penner scored at 2:28 of overtime and Ales Hemsky had a goal and two assists in Edmonton's comeback victory.

Sam Gagner equalized at 3-all



Boston Bruins goalie Tim Thomas blocks a shot in the second period of an NHL hockey game against the Philadelphia Flyers, Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2010, in Philadelphia.

with a short-handed goal with 6:43 left in the third.

Hemsky returned to the Oilers' lineup after missing three games because of a groin injury. He drew Edmonton to 3-2 with his seventh goal at 10:02 of the third and got his second assist of the game on Gagner's goal after setting up Kurtis Foster's power-play tally late in the first.

Devan Dubnyk made 36 saves to help the Oilers win consecutive games for the first time since the beginning of the season. Roman Hamrlik, Mathieu Darche and Scott Gomez scored for Montreal.

Predators 4, Blue Jackets 3, SO

At Columbus, longtime Columbus nemesis Steve Sullivan scored the only goal in the shootout for Nashville, and Pekka Rinne stopped Jake Voracek, Rick Nash and Antoine Vermette in the tiebreaker.

Colin Wilson, Sergei Kostitsyn and Kevin Klein scored in regulation for Nashville.

Vermette scored twice and Kris Russell added a goal for Columbus.

Capitals 4, Blues 1

At St. Louis, Semyon Varlamov made 37 saves for his fourth straight victory since recovering from a groin injury and Washington got back at the goalie who eliminated the Capitals in the

playoffs last spring.

Nicklas Backstrom had two goals and an assist to help NHL-leading Washington push its points total to 38. Brooks Laich and Boyd Gordon also scored for the Capitals in their first win in St. Louis since Oct. 26, 1996. The Capitals got a goal in each period against Jaroslav Halak, who bedeviled them during heavy underdog Montreal's first-round upset of the overall No. 1 seed last spring. Halak allowed one goal in each of the final three games of the series, facing a total of 131 shots.

Coyotes 4, Wild 2

At St. Paul, Scottie Upshall scored twice, Ed Jovanovski and Lauri Korpikoski added goals, and backup Jason LaBarbera made 33 saves for Phoenix.

Pierre-Marc Bouchard returned to the Wild lineup after a 104-game absence, the product of lingering post-concussion symptoms, but his presence didn't give the home team much of a spark.

In other NHL games it was Nashville 4, Columbus 3, SO; Edmonton 4, Montreal 3, OT; Boston 3, Philadelphia 0; Washington 4, St. Louis 1; Phoenix 4, Minnesota 2; Vancouver 7, Calgary 2; and Anaheim 5, Florida 3.

Giants DB Rolle apologizes for military comment

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J.

— New York Giants safety Antrel Rolle has apologized for comparing fans' booing players after a bad half of football to fans booing troops returning home from Iraq after a tour of duty.

Rolle says he used a very poor, inappropriate example on Thursday to demonstrate how seriously he takes his job. "Obviously, there is no comparison between the men and women of our military putting their life on the line defending our country and what I do," Rolle said in a statement issued by the team early in the evening. "They risk their lives and that gives me the opportunity to play a game for a living. 'After I made my earlier comments, somebody even said to me: how would your father, who is the chief of police in Homestead (Fla.), and puts himself at risk every day, feel about the comparison you made? Again, it was a very poor, very inappropriate choice of words.' Rolle has been upset with Giants' fans who booed the team at halftime on Sunday with the



Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Michael Vick scrambles out of the grip of New York Giants safety Antrel Rolle during the second half of an NFL football game in Philadelphia, Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010.

team trailing Jacksonville 17-6 at halftime. New York rallied to win the game, 24-20. The six-year veteran criticized the fans in a paid radio interview earlier this week and he was asked about it again in the locker room on Thursday after the Giants (7-4) practiced for this weekend's game with Washington (5-6). "They want to make it that guys paid this much money for a ticket, yeah, I understand that, I understand completely," Rolle said. "We risk ourselves out there on the field each and every day also. When soldiers come home from Iraq, you don't boo them. I look at it

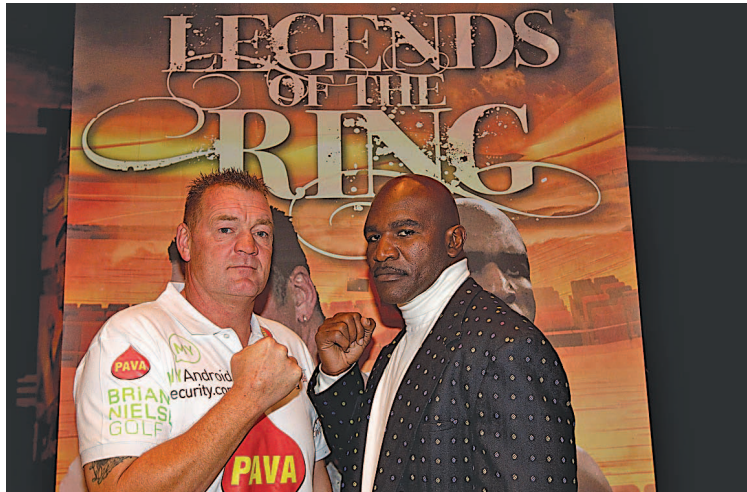
the same way. I take my job seriously."

Rolle signed a \$37 million, free-agent contract with the Giants in the offseason. Ever since, he has been blunt in answering questions with the New York media. Though a newcomer, he even questioned Justin Tuck's leadership abilities earlier in the season after a loss to Indianapolis.

"You ask me a question I am going to give you an answer, an honest answer," Rolle said. "My coaches ask me, my girlfriend asks me, I am going to give them an honest answer, I don't sugarcoat anything." □

Associated Press

Holyfield wants world champion belt one last time



Former world heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield, right, and Danish ex-champion Brian Nielsen are seen at a press conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, Thursday Dec. 2, 2010. Holyfield has been lined up to fight Denmark's Brian Nielsen in Denmark on March 4, promoters said Wednesday. The bout will feature fighters with a combined age of 93. Holyfield is 48 years old and, Nielsen 45 years.

Associated Press

JAN M. OLSEN

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Evander Holyfield vowed Thursday he'll continue to fight until he regains the world heavyweight title.

The 48-year-old former champion will face Denmark's 45-year-old Brian Nielsen in Copenhagen on March 5 in a non-title bout. "My goal is to be the undisputed world champion one more time before I let it go. Once I do that, I sit down," he said. "And until I do that, I continue to fight."

David Haye and Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko hold the current world heavyweight titles.

Holyfield, who held the heavyweight title four times, knocked out Francois Botha last April after losses to Nikolay Valuev and Sultan Ibragimov. He has a career record of 43-10-2, with 28 knockouts.

"The most important thing to me is to fights. I take the fights that are available," he told a news conference.

Nielsen, who lost to Tyson in 2001, retired in 2003 after an 11-year pro career because of a knee injury that has required several operations.

Nielsen claims to have lost 33 pounds in the past few months but says he needs to drop more weight.

"I know that I have always been fat, but for my own sake I need to look like a boxer for once ... which I have never done before," he said smiling. "I will be in good shape."

Nielsen's record of 64-2 with 43 KOs is impressive and was noted by Holyfield.

"You don't have a record like that without being good," Holyfield said. "I don't worry about the opponent. I am concerned more about me. I am in the best shape."

Nielsen won the lightly regarded IBO title in 1996 when he stopped Tony La Rosa in the second round in Copenhagen. He also ended 47-year-old former champ Larry Holmes' hopes of a winning another title in a successful defense a year later. □



Former US President Bill Clinton, left, and Sunil Gulati, Chairman USA bid committee, right, look on after it was announced that Qatar will host the 2022 FIFA Soccer World Cup, in Zurich, Switzerland, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010.

Associated Press

U.S MISSES WCUP

Continued from Front Page

Russia will host the 2018 tournament, beating joint bids by Spain-Portugal and Belgium-Netherlands in a vote also announced Thursday. England, soccer's motherland, received just two votes and was knocked out in the first round.

America fared slightly better, surviving until the final round as Australia, Japan and South Korea were eliminated. But the U.S. received just three votes in the opening round, likely the three from its own North and Central American and Caribbean region.

"I think it's a big setback," said Walter Bahr, a member of the 1950 U.S. World Cup team that upset England. "Financially, I think it's a big blow, and soccer-wise, it's a tremendous blow."

But the defeat doesn't carry quite the personal sting as Chicago's humiliating loss to Rio de Janeiro in the bid for the 2016 Olympics. Or New York's early-round loss in the 2012 Olympic race, ultimately won by London.

While Rio's plea to bring the games to South America for the first time was compelling and may have been insurmountable, Chicago's first-round loss also was a clear repudiation of the U.S. Olympic Committee. However, there was no apparent animosity toward the U.S. and its World Cup bid.

U.S. Soccer Federation President Sunil Gulati, a key force in the progress American soccer has made

over a quarter-century, has known every member of the executive committee for years. Because of the secret vote, he was never able to gauge support.

"There was the possibility of some alliances. The numbers would seem to bare that out," he said. "It's politics. It's friendships and relationships. It's alliances. It's tactics."

Still, the U.S. is now 0-for-3 in recent years when it comes to winning the world's biggest games.

American soccer officials saw a second World Cup as a way to boost the steady but slow growth of a sport struggling to gain attention among fans focused on the NFL, Major League Baseball, the NBA and college football and basketball.

The USSF spent two years and millions of dollars to bring the World Cup back to America for the first time since 1994, when a record 3.59 million fans attended an event that opened soccer to U.S.-style marketing and corporate sales.

"I consider it a disappointment for me personally, for sure, and a setback as we're trying to move this sport forward," Gulati said. "Getting the right to host this event 12 years from now, with that sort of buildup time, was the equivalent of putting your foot on the accelerator and really taking a big jump."

"And so from that perspective, it's certainly an opportunity lost. Do I think we're going to get to where we want to get eventually? The answer is yes."

Now the U.S. will have to wait until at least 2026, when it may have to compete with bids from Europe, soccer's financial base. The 2014 tournament will be held in Brazil.

Former President Bill Clinton lobbied voters in South Africa during this year's World Cup and again this week in Zurich. President Barack Obama didn't make a personal appearance as he did at the 2016 vote but did videotape an appeal that was played Wednesday during the final presentations.

"Wrong decision," Obama said after the vote. "But I continue to be optimistic that our team, wherever we're playing, is going to make it to the finals next time out."

FIFA president Sepp Blatter prizes the role soccer can play in nation building, and that theme was a cornerstone of Qatar's campaign. It used its 30-minute presentation Wednesday to underline how the tournament could unify a region ravaged by conflict, promising FIFA that this was the right time to bring the world's most popular sporting event to the Middle East for the first time.

"FIFA has a lot of different things to consider. They clearly understood the financial advantages of our bid. They also are interested in innovation and blazing new trails and going to new areas. And I think it's clear that those kinds of considerations ruled the day," said John Skipper, ESPN's executive vice president of content and a U.S. bid committee member. Russia will also be a first-time host.

"Soccer is a world game and you've got to spread the wealth and you've got spread the enthusiasm," said Marcelo Balboa, a defender on the U.S. teams at the 1990 and '94 World Cups. "By going to Qatar, they're showing FIFA is willing to go anywhere." American soccer star Landon Donovan agreed.

"When you hear President Blatter talk about his goals, he wants to spread soccer around the world. You can't begrudge him that," he said.

Still, there were suspicions about the motivations behind both votes. □



Gift Guide: Tablet and e-reader buying advice

By DANA WOLLMAN,
AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK — This holiday season, it will be hard to enter a store without setting eyes on a tablet computer or an e-reader. In both categories, big-name manufacturers — along with some you might not have heard of — are jumping on the bandwagon, trying hard to undercut each other with lower-priced gadgets.

It doesn't help that so many of them claim to do the same thing. The iPad dominates the field, but there's a slew of contenders that all run Google Inc.'s Android software, which is already common on smart phones. Meanwhile, the smaller tablets look almost indistinguishable from some new e-readers that hope to unseat the Kindle.

So which to buy? Here are the best options and some advice for figuring out which is the right choice for the person on your list.

E-readers:

Amazon Kindle (Wi-Fi only: \$139; 3G: \$189)

Pros: The Kindle's display, which measures 6 inches diagonally, uses "electronic-ink" technology, which makes it easy to read books, newspapers and magazines in direct sunlight. It falls somewhere between an iPhone and an iPad in size and

weighs half a pound, making the device from Amazon.com Inc. thinner and lighter than Barnes & Noble Inc.'s Nookcolor, its strongest rival. The Kindle also lasts longer on a charge: up to one week with Wi-Fi on and two to three weeks with it turned off.

Cons: Screen is gray-scale only. The pages are slow to turn, and zooming and scrolling don't work. Lacks a built-in light source. Clunky built-in Web browser. Doesn't accept books from public libraries.

Barnes & Noble Nookcolor (\$249)

Pros: Displays books and magazines in color. The brightness of the 7-inch touchscreen can be adjusted for comfortable reading in a wide range of lighting conditions. Besides a large library of books, magazines and newspapers, Barnes & Noble sells children's books with built-in narration tracks. Some books can be lent to friends, who can download Barnes & Noble's software for free to read them.

Cons: Children's books are expensive — \$8, compared with child-friendly iPad apps that cost about \$2. The screen is too small for comfortable reading of magazines. At 1 pound, it is twice as heavy as Amazon's Kindle, although still lighter than the iPad. Its battery life (eight hours with Wi-Fi

turned off) is relatively short, although still sufficient for a round-trip flight across the country.

Tablets:

Apple iPad (Wi-Fi only: \$499-\$699; 3G: \$629-\$829)

Pros: Has the same intuitive interface as the iPhone and iPod Touch, but optimized for the iPad's larger 9.7-inch display. Syncs with the popular iTunes software, whose store sells music, movies and e-books. Up to 10 hours of battery life. There are more than 300,000 apps available in the app store; more than 40,000 of them were designed specifically for the iPad, making this the most versatile tablet, by far. All models connect over Wi-Fi, while 3G versions can use AT&T's cellular network, whose plans in the U.S. cost either \$15 or \$25 per month and require no long-term contracts.

Cons: It is relatively large and weighs about 1.5 pounds, so it's not as easy to use one-handed as a smaller tablet such as Samsung Electronics Co.'s Galaxy Tab. Lacks a camera for video chatting. Students will find fewer textbooks available in Apple Inc.'s iBooks than in Amazon's Kindle store.

Samsung Galaxy Tab (\$399 with two-year contract; \$599-\$649 without)

Pros: The Tab runs the same Android



FILE - In this Sept. 2, 2010 file photo, Thomas Richter, Head of Portfolio Management for Telecommunications Europe of Samsung presents the new Samsung Galaxy Tab, a tablet computer to compete with the Apple iPad, at IFA, in Berlin, Germany.

(AP Photo/Gero Breloer, file)

software that can be found on many a smart phone. Solid build quality and brisk performance. It is a bit smaller than the iPad and about half its weight. It has dual cameras, something the iPad lacks entirely, allowing people to video chat, record HD movies and snap still photos. The Tab's display is sharper than the iPad's. □



A man walks past Google Inc. headquarters in Mountain View, California.

By JOE MANDAK,
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Google Inc. has acknowledged that it trespassed when it took a photo of a Pittsburgh-area house for its Street View service, but will pay only \$1 in damages to a couple who sued.

U.S. District Magistrate Judge Cathy Bissoon on Thursday signed off on a

consent judgment, a mutually agreed-upon verdict, between the Mountain View, Calif. company and Aaron and Christine Boring, of Franklin Park. A Google spokeswoman told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, which first reported the parties had agreed to the judgment, that the settlement is limited to the Borings.

"We are pleased that this

Google admits trespassing in Pa., pays couple \$1

lawsuit has finally ended with plaintiffs' acknowledgment that they are entitled to only \$1," Google said in a statement to The Associated Press, adding that its ability to continue the Street View feature is unaffected.

The Borings' attorney, Gregg Zegarelli, said his clients are satisfied to have made the point that Google trespassed and realize they "can't control a company such as Google that operates worldwide."

"This is about right and wrong. Maybe my client and I are hopeless romantics, but I suppose some people said the same thing in 1950 about a male executive calling female staff 'sweetie/honey,' or African Americans just sitting a few seats farther in the back of the bus," Zegarelli said.

The Borings said in a statement released by Zegarelli that the amount of the judgment isn't

the issue.

"This is one sweet dollar of vindication," the statement said. "Google could have just sent us an apology letter in the very beginning, but chose to try to prove they had a legal right to be on our land. We are glad they finally gave up."

Google's Street View feature lets users view homes and businesses as though they are driving along a three-dimensional street. It's assembled by having cars with digital cameras collect images that are then paired with Google's map data.

The Borings sued in 2008, saying their privacy was violated when Google took a photo of their home. They said the images could only have been obtained if the driver traveled about 1,000 feet up a private road clearly marked "No Trespassing."

Google said people can have

such photos removed upon request and argued that the images of the Boring home were no more invasive than those found on a county real estate tax website.

Since its launch in 2007, Google's Street View has expanded to more than 100 cities in 33 countries, prompting privacy concerns along the way.

Greek officials asked for more safeguards before its streets were photographed, and some English villagers protested by forming a human chain to stop a camera van.

In November, Google bowed to pressure from German residents and made that country the only one in the world where people can ask in advance to have images of their homes excluded from the Street View feature.

Zegarelli praised his clients for sticking with the case. □



FILE - In this Oct. 30, 2009 file photo, Aretha Franklin performs at the 25th Anniversary Rock & Roll Hall of Fame concert at Madison Square Garden in New York. A community prayer vigil was held in Detroit for Aretha Franklin on Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2010, a day before organizers say the singing legend is to undergo a medical procedure. (AP Photo/Henny Ray Abrams, File)

Prayer vigil held for ailing Aretha Franklin

DETROIT – A community prayer vigil has been held in Detroit for Aretha Franklin, a day before organizers say the singing legend is to undergo a medical procedure.

City Councilwoman JoAnn Watson and others gathered downtown Wednesday to pray for Franklin. Last month, the 68-year-old singer announced she was canceling all concert dates and personal appearances through May on the orders of her doctors.

Franklin wasn't at the vigil, but in a statement she thanked the City Council, saying "all prayers are good."

A news release announcing the vigil says Franklin's medical procedure is scheduled for Thursday. A message seeking comment was left with Franklin's publicist, Tracey Jordan. □

Eminem tops Grammy nods with 10; Bruno Mars has 7



Rapper Eminem performs 'Not Afraid' at the 2010 BET Awards in Los Angeles June 27, 2010.

By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY,

AP Music Writer

When Eminem was first nominated for album of the year some 10 years ago for

"The Marshall Mathers LP," it marked a milestone for the Grammys as it chose to honor an album that was considered masterful in its artistry yet morally bankrupt in its values. On Wednesday, as the Recording Academy once again nominated Eminem for album of the year along with nine other bids, it again gave accolades to a foul but genius piece of work — Cee Lo's "(Expletive) You," an infectious retro groove with an unforgettable, unprintable chorus.

The tune, which is so profane it had to be changed to "Forget You" for radio play, was nominated for two top Grammy honors: record and song of the year.

"It wasn't meant to be a radio song," said Cee Lo after the nominations.

"It was meant to be something with flair and first impression and it really took on a life of its own, and I had no idea it would become what it is today."

It's a sign of how much times, and Eminem himself, have changed that his leading nominations were not controversial, but expected and respected.

The person with the second-leading tally, Bruno Mars with seven, was not without his own drama this year, after being arrested in Las Vegas in a cocaine possession case, which is pending. It was the only negative in a brilliant year for Mars, who co-wrote

"(Expletive) You" and was also featured on B.o.B's "Nothin' on You," also nominated for record of the year.

"It's just been a great year, incredible, incredible year, and I can't believe this is happening to me," said Mars, who was also nominated for best male pop vocal for his own hit, "Just the Way You Are."

"We've worked so hard trying to make a living doing music and the fact that we're here right now is incredible, incredible," he added, speaking from Club Nokia in downtown Los Angeles, where the nominations were announced as part of an hourlong live special on CBS. Other top nominees included Lady Antebellum, Jay-Z and Lady Gaga, who were all nominated with six each. Gaga also was nominated for album of the year — the second straight nomination in the category for her.

For Eminem, "Recovery" was a critical and commercial triumph. It became the best-selling album of the year so far, with more than 3 million copies sold, and spawned top hits like "Love the Way You Lie" featuring Rihanna, which was nominated for song and record of the year.

It also marked a stark contrast between the Eminem nominated 10 years ago and the one nominated this year. Back then, he was a stunning yet divisive figure whose violent imagery and slurs against gays and women outraged as many people as he entertained. Eminem would become one of the best-selling artists in the world and arguably rap's greatest artist, but his stature was diminished as his battle with prescription drug addiction led to lags between albums and sub-par material.

With "Recovery," an album that detailed his battles and how he overcame them, his status as the best rapper — and pop's top artist — was restored. □

Bakula plays it single on 'Men of a Certain Age'

By LYNN ELBER, AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES – Scott Bakula, husband and father of four, gets a kick out of portraying a feckless playboy at mid-life on TNT's "Men of a Certain Age."

"I don't hope and dream of that other lifestyle, but it's fun to play a character that's living it. I have friends who live it, and I'm happy to let them have it because it's not an easy road out there," said Bakula, who plays Terry on the series that also stars Ray Romano and Andre Braugher.

"It's a struggle for my friends trying to date younger women or find somebody to get married and have a baby," Bakula said. When TNT's "Men of a Certain Age" returns Dec. 6 for its second season, Terry finds he's got decisions to confront about work, life and growing up as he turns 50. He's making progress, Bakula said. Shelving his dreams of acting success, Terry is working at the car dealership managed by buddy Owen (Braugher) and trying to adjust to the daily grind.



In this publicity image released by TNT, Scott Bakula is shown in a scene from 'Men of a Certain Age.'

(AP Photo)

Terry is "such a mess," Bakula said, but he's trying. A rekindled relationship even tests his womanizing ways. Bakula, 56, whose credits include TV's "Quantum Leap" and "Star Trek: Enterprise" and the movie "The Informant!", is delighted to be part of a project that he says "felt a little risky." The three middle-age characters at its center aren't the demographic prized by youth-obsessed advertisers. Romano's clout, the result of his hit CBS sitcom "Everybody Loves

Raymond," is why it's on the air.

"A show like this doesn't get made unless somebody like Ray wants to do it," Bakula said.

He finds irony in its time slot, opposite "Monday Night Football," and notes that women make up a substantial part of the audience for "Men of a Certain Age."

Whether female viewers are looking for middle-age beefcake or insights into their own partners' psyches, Bakula is glad the show has cultivated a following. Bakula said he and his wife, actress Chelsea Field, enjoy watching it together.

Making the series is "just a blast. We laugh so much," he said of his fellow cast mates. "Men of a Certain Age" may be a ground-breaker with an episode (the Jan. 10 series finale) that includes a boys-gone-wild Palm Springs getaway centered on Terry's 50th birthday — and colonoscopies for all.

A DVD with season one's 10 episodes was recently released, with bonuses including cast commentary, deleted scenes and a gag reel. □

BUSINESS

Aruba TODAY



CEO PersiCo Europe's Zein Abdalla, left, and Wimm-Bill-Dann Board Member, David Iakobachvili, right, shake hands after a news conference in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010. PepsiCo, one of the world's largest food-and-beverage companies, and Wimm-Bill-Dann Foods, Russia's leading branded food-and-beverage company announced that PepsiCo will acquire 66 percent of Wimm-Bill-Dann for \$3.8 billion.

(AP Photo/Sergey Ponomarev)

PepsiCo to buy stake of Wimm-Bill-Dann for \$3.8B

By SARAH SKIDMORE
MICHELLE CHAPMAN,

AP Business Writers

NEW YORK — PepsiCo Inc. is buying a majority stake in Wimm-Bill-Dann Foods for \$3.8 billion, a deal that will make it the biggest food and beverage company in Russia. The deal is Pepsi's largest international acquisition ever. It gives the company dominant position in the fast-growing Russian market and furthers its plan to build its global nutrition business. Combined, the companies will hold six of Russia's 20 largest food and beverage brands and will be about twice the size of its nearest competitor in the country. PepsiCo said the deal will make Russia its second-largest market behind the U.S. "This deal makes perfect sense for Pepsi," John Sicher, editor and publisher of Beverage Digest.

Wimm-Bill-Dann, whose shares are traded in Moscow and on the New York Stock Exchange, produces dairy products, juices, mineral water and baby food.

Founded in 1992 shortly after the breakup of the Soviet Union, it has grown from handful of employees working in one room to launch its first juice brand, J7, to more than 16,000 people and 38 plants in Russia, the Ukraine and Central Asia. The company had revenue of about \$2.4 billion for the year ended in June 2010.

Pepsi plans to buy a 66 percent stake in Wimm-Bill-Dann, pending Russian regulatory approval, at \$33 per American depository receipt in the company. That represents a 32 percent premium to the 30-day average trading price. The company said the Russian government supports the investment. Pepsi plans to later offer to buy the rest of the company. □

Jump in holiday retail sales pushes stocks higher

By DAVID K. RANDALL,
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — Signs that the retail and housing markets are improving encouraged traders to extend a stock rally into a second day Thursday.

Major retailers reported sales in November that were stronger than analysts expected. Increased spending during the holiday season would be a strong signal that consumers are feeling more confident.

"Any sign that the consumer is doing better means that the economy will be doing better," said Drew Matus, a senior economist at UBS.

Costco Wholesale Corp., Target Corp. and Limited Brands Inc all beat Wall Street sales forecasts. Teen retailer Abercrombie & Fitch Co. jumped 10.5 percent after reporting that its sales soared 32 percent. "The consumer is strong and month after month retailing has been very strong," said Ryan Detrick, the chief technical strategist at Schaeffer's Investment Research. "If you take a step back it's clear that the U.S. economy continues to slowly expand."

The National Association of Realtors said the number of people who signed contracts to buy homes jumped



A flag hangs on the wall of the JP Morgan company stall on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange in New York July 15, 2010.

10.4 percent in October. Economists expected a slight decline. Home builders KB Home and Toll Brothers Co. each rose by more than 3 percent.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 92.14, or 0.8 percent, to 11,347.92. The Dow jumped 2.3 percent Wednesday, its biggest gain since Sept. 1, after a report showed that private employers were adding jobs.

The Standard and Poor's 500 index rose 11.67, or 1 percent, to 1,217.74. The Nasdaq composite index rose 21.98, or 0.9 percent, to 2,571.41.

The strong economic reports overshadowed an unexpected rise in new claims for unemployment benefits. The Labor Department said first-time unemployment claims

rose to 436,000 last week.

Traders found a silver lining in the report, however: the average number of new unemployment claims over the past month fell to a two-year low, signaling that the job market may be improving.

Shares rose overseas after the European Central Bank said it will keep its benchmark interest rate at a record low 1 percent. Investors had hoped that bank would announce more purchases of bonds issued by struggling European countries including Ireland, Italy and Spain.

The Euro Stoxx 50 index, which tracks blue chip companies in countries that use the euro, rose 1.5 percent. The dollar fell 0.7 percent against an index of six currencies. □

White House presses Congress for jobless benefits

WASHINGTON — The White House is stepping up its push for Congress to extend unemployment insurance for out-of-work Americans, linking the benefits to an extension of expiring Bush-era tax cuts.

President Barack Obama's Council of Economic Advisers on Thursday reported that if Congress does not extend the benefits, two million unemployed workers will lose

coverage this month and 7 million would lose coverage by November 2011. The report says the benefits have a broad impact because recipients spend the money they receive and sustain employment elsewhere in the economy. The economic advisers estimate that the unemployment benefits translated into 800,000 more jobs and a gross domestic product that was 0.8 percent higher in September 2010. □






Study says even being a bit overweight is risky

Obesity starts at a BMI rating of 30

BMI, or body mass index, is a standard measure based on weight and height used to estimate body fat.

Calculating your Body Mass Index (BMI) BMI = $\frac{\text{Weight (pounds)}}{\text{Height (inches)}^2} \times 703$

Body Mass Index chart, ages 20 and older

															
	Healthy weight (Below 25)			Overweight (25-29)						Obese (Over 30)					
	WEIGHT IN POUNDS														
HEIGHT	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250	
4'6	29	31	34	36	39	41	43	46	48	51	53	56	58	60	
4'8	27	29	31	34	36	38	40	43	45	47	49	52	54	56	
4'10	25	27	29	31	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	
5'0	23	25	27	29	31	33	35	37	39	41	43	45	47	49	
5'2	22	24	26	27	29	31	33	35	37	38	40	42	44	46	
5'4	21	22	24	26	28	29	31	33	34	36	38	40	41	43	
5'6	19	21	23	24	26	27	29	31	32	34	36	37	39	40	
5'8	18	20	21	23	24	26	27	29	30	32	34	35	37	38	
5'10	17	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	29	30	32	33	35	36	
6'0	16	18	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	28	30	31	33	34	

SOURCE: Office of the Surgeon General

AP

Graphic shows how to calculate your body mass index and includes a BMI chart

By STEPHANIE NANO, Associated Press

NEW YORK — Lugging around a few extra pounds? One of the largest studies to look at health and weight finds that you don't have to be obese to raise your risk of premature death. Merely being overweight carries some risk, too.

Obesity increases the risk of death from heart disease, stroke and certain cancers. But whether being merely

overweight contributes to an early death as well has been uncertain and controversial. Some research has suggested being a little pudgy has little effect or can even be a good thing.

The latest research involving about 1.5 million people concluded that healthy white adults who were overweight were 13 percent more likely to die during the time they were followed in the study than those whose weight is in

an ideal range.

"Having a little extra meat on your bones — if that meat happens to be fat — is harmful, not beneficial," said Dr. Michael Thun of the American Cancer Society, senior author of the study. The study's conclusions, published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine, are similar to three other large studies, said the lead author, Amy Berrington of the National Cancer Institute.

"Now there's really a very large body of evidence which supports the finding that being overweight is associated with a small increased risk of death," Berrington said.

For their government-funded analysis, the researchers pooled 19 long-term studies of mostly white adults. They used each person's body mass index — a measure of height and weight — and checked to see who died during the follow-up periods, which ranged from five to 28 years. They focused on people who were healthy at the beginning of the studies, excluding smokers and those with heart disease or cancer because those affect death rates and researchers wanted to see the impact of weight alone.

The lowest death rate for

healthy women who had never smoked was in the high end of the ideal body mass index range — between 22.5 and 24.9. Compared with that group, those who were overweight had an increased risk of death of 13 percent. The increased risk ranged from 44 to 88 percent for those who were obese.

The morbidly obese were 2 1/2 times more likely to die prematurely. The results for men were similar.

Most of the participants in the studies were white so the research focused on them. Results may be different in other ethnic and racial groups, Berrington said. She said evidence suggests that for the same BMI level, African-Americans might have a lower risk of death and Asians a higher risk.

Two-thirds of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese. Overweight begins at a BMI measurement of 25, obese at 30 and morbidly obese at 40. A 5-foot-6 person is considered overweight at 155 pounds, obese at 186 pounds and morbidly obese at 248 pounds.

Because of its size and the diversity of studies included, the research "provides strong evidence against the position

that it's a good thing for health to be overweight," Thun said.

The notion that a "bit of reserves" would help keep you from getting sick probably stems from the days when food was scarce, he said.

The latest research was launched after a controversial 2005 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that concluded being overweight didn't raise the risk of death; that report included smokers and those with pre-existing illnesses.

University of South Carolina obesity researcher Steven Blair said the results were consistent with other studies and the "massive effort" was commendable. But he said there wasn't enough information available about fitness level or physical activity. A proponent of the "fit and fat" theory, Blair said his research has shown that obese people who are tested and deemed fit did not face increased risks of dying.

"If we want to get to the bottom of the health hazards of overweight and obesity, we have to have better data on physical activity," Blair said. "Until we do that, there's uncertainty of how important BMI is as an important predictor of mortality." □

FDA Panel Votes Against Drugs Said to Prevent Prostate Cancer

A U.S. Food and Drug Administration advisory committee on Wednesday voted against approving two drugs for the prevention of prostate cancer, the third-highest cancer killer of men.

The panel voted 17-0, with one abstention, that the risks of Merck's Proscar outweighed its benefits, according to the Associated Press. And in a similar vote, the panel voted 14-2, with two abstentions, against GlaxoSmithKline's Avodart. Both drugs are already approved to treat enlarged prostates.

"In a setting like this, the onus is on the drug to be completely safe, and to show benefit, and I don't think it reached that level," said panel Chairman Dr. Wyndham Wilson, of the National Cancer Institute. The FDA does not have to heed the advice of its advisory panels, but it typically does.

Research presented to the panel by Merck and

GlaxoSmithKline showed a 25 percent decrease in the incidence of low-grade prostate tumors among users of the drugs.

But concern that a small number of men taking the drugs actually developed more aggressive tumors led the panelists to find that the risk of aggressive tumors outweighed the benefit of reducing tumors that are seldom fatal, the wire service reported.

FDA regulators already had several concerns about using the medications for the prevention of prostate cancer, the AP reported. For one thing, black men, who are at high risk for the disease, were underrepresented in the clinical trials. "The applicability to African-American men is not known due to marked under-representation," the FDA's online review stated.

Blacks made up just 4 percent of Merck's patients

and only 2 percent of Glaxo's patients, according to the AP. The panel of outside experts assembled by the FDA also discussed the overall value of preventing low-grade tumors. According to the FDA, more than three-quarters of the tumors the drugs prevent are slow-growing, meaning they are non-aggressive and probably not life-threatening for anyone with a life expectancy of less than 20 years.

Also, slightly more aggressive tumors were seen in men taking Avodart and Proscar, compared with those taking placebo pills, according to the FDA. But the pharmaceutical companies say the drugs simply make those tumors easier to detect because they shrink the prostate.

The U.S. National Cancer Institute estimates that 217,730 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year and 32,050 men will die of it. □

Lee Harvey Oswald's coffin to be auctioned in L.A.

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) – For the JFK-assassination conspiracy junkie who has everything: Lee Harvey Oswald's coffin. Body not included.
A Los Angeles auction house said on Tuesday it would sell the simple pine coffin in which the suspected assassin of President John F. Kennedy was buried for almost 20 years.

Bidding will start at \$1,000, but the item is expected to fetch strong interest from museums and collectors of presidential memorabilia when it goes on the block on December 16.
"There's just a lot of interest in Kennedy and anything to do with his assassination," said Laura Yntema, auction manager at Santa Monica, California-based Nate D. Sanders.



An electric eel illuminates a Christmas tree in Kamakura, just south of Tokyo, in this image taken from television footage.

It's beginning to eel a lot like Christmas

TOKYO (Reuters) – An aquarium in Japan is shocking visitors with its Christmas display -- using an eco-friendly electric eel to illuminate the lights on its holiday tree.
Each time the eel moves, two aluminum panels gather enough electricity to light up the 2-meter (6 ft 6 in) tall tree, decked out in white, in glowing intermittent flashes.
The aquarium in Kamakura, just south of Tokyo, has featured the electric eel for five years to encourage ecological sensitivity. This year, it added a Santa robot that sings and dances when visitors stomp on a pad. "We first decided to get an electric eel to light up a Christmas tree and its top ornament using its electricity," said Kazuhiko Minawa, on the public relations team for the Enoshima Aquarium. "As electric eels use their muscles when generating a charge, we also thought to get humans to use their muscles to light up parts of the tree and power Santa."
Visitor Sumie Chiba was fascinated with the display but questioned the practicality of eel energy for domestic use. "If this was possible, I think it's very nice and extremely eco-friendly," she said. □



The coffin of suspected assassin of President John F. Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald, is shown in this undated handout image. California-based Nate D. Sanders auction house auction house said on November 30, 2010, it would sell the simple pine coffin in which Lee Harvey Oswald was buried for almost 20 years.

Sanders.
The coffin was unearthed in October 1981 after a legal dispute between Oswald's widow, Marina, and his brother, Robert. Marina successfully sought an exhumation to test a conspiracy theory that a lookalike Russian agent had been buried in her husband's place, according to the auction house.
A medical exam showed the

badly decomposed body was indeed Oswald's, and he was returned to Shannon Rose Hill Memorial Park in Fort Worth, Texas, in a new casket. The original coffin, which had suffered extensive water damage, is being sold by Baumgardner Funeral Home, the local undertaker which handled the re-internment. □

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UN weather agency: 2010 among 3 hottest years



A woman looks at an exhibit on climate change during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Mexico, Wednesday Dec. 1, 2010. The host nation of the U.N. climate talks in Cancun has called the U.S. pledge to cut greenhouse gas emissions 'modest,' while praising other non-binding offers made by India and China.

(AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo)

By ARTHUR MAX,
Associated Press

CANCUN, Mexico — This year is "almost certain" to rank among the three hottest years on record, and 2001-2010 is undoubtedly the warmest 10-year period since the beginning of weather records in 1850, the U.N. weather agency said Thursday. Data from the World Meteorological Organization released at U.N. climate negotiations confirmed a warming trend that has gone on for decades, which scientists attribute to man-made pollution trapping heat in the atmosphere.

WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud said this year's temperatures through October were at near-record levels. Data for November and December will be analyzed in

early 2011 but were expected to be slightly cooler than normal.

Still, there is a "significant possibility 2010 could be the warmest," Jarraud told reporters.

Cold winters in Europe — not counting the early snow and freezing temperatures now gripping Britain and northern parts of the continent — meant it was the coolest year for Europeans since 1996, Jarraud said, but that "did not reflect the global average."

The two other extraordinary years were 1998 and 2005. Jarraud said these three steaming years were within a fraction of a degree — 0.02 degrees Celsius (0.036 Fahrenheit) — of each other.

This year also saw startling weather events: a deadly summer heat wave in

Russia with temperatures in Moscow soaring to a record 38.2 Celsius, just above 100 Fahrenheit. Devastating floods in Pakistan were part of the same weather anomaly, Jarraud said.

Although there were no catastrophic hurricanes or cyclones this year, heavy rains lashed Australia and Indonesia, floods swamped Thailand and Vietnam, and drought afflicted the Amazon basin in Latin America and southwest China.

While no single disaster could be traced to human activity and greenhouse gases, Jarraud said natural variation cannot

explain the decade-long record.

"If you don't take the human emission into account you cannot reproduce what you observe," he said.

Preliminary data, collected from four science centers in the U.S. and Britain, were released as the 193-nation conference negotiated details of a package of measures, mostly designed to help poor countries cope with changes in agriculture, rising sea levels and other effects of a warming world.

Prospects for a limited deal have brightened with the U.S. and China appearing to narrow

differences on a key element: how to monitor and verify greenhouse gas emissions.

But other issues that go to the heart of a new global warming treaty — long-term commitments for cutting emissions — proved stubbornly unmoving and out of reach for any resolution during the annual two-week conference.

Nonetheless, analysts said an understanding on measuring emissions would be an important step that could help break the long-standing deadlock on reducing emissions as the negotiations continue in 2011. □

Microbe found that can use arsenic as nutrient

By RANDOLPH E. SCHMID,
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON — The discovery of a strange bacteria that can use arsenic as one of its nutrients widens the scope for finding new forms of life on Earth and possibly beyond. While researchers discovered the unusual bacteria here on Earth, they say it shows that life has possibilities beyond the major elements that have been considered essential.

"This organism has dual capability. It can grow with either phosphorous or arsenic. That makes it very peculiar, though it falls short of being some form of truly 'alien' life," commented Paul C. W. Davies of Arizona State University, a co-author of the report appearing in Thursday's online edition of the journal

Science.

Six major elements have long been considered essential for life — carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus and sulfur.

But the researchers found that the bacteria, discovered in Mono Lake, Calif., is able to continue to grow after substituting arsenic for phosphorous.

"It makes you wonder what else is possible," said Ariel D. Anbar of Arizona State University, a co-author of the report.

The find is important in the search for life beyond Earth because researchers need to be able to recognize life, to know what life looks like, Anbar said.

The study focuses on a microbe found on Earth.

However, the announcement of a news conference to discuss it, which did not disclose details of the find, generated widespread speculation on the Internet that the report would disclose the discovery of extraterrestrial life. It didn't.

The discovery "does show that in other planetary environments organisms might be able to use other elements to drive biochemistry and that the 'standard' set of elements we think are absolutely necessary for life might not be so fixed," commented Charles Cockell, professor at the Planetary and Space Sciences Research Institute, Open University, in Milton Keynes, United Kingdom. Cockell was not part of the research team.

"This work is novel because it shows the substitution of one element for another in fundamental biochemistry and biochemical structure," added Cockell.

It wasn't a chance discovery. Felisa Wolfe-Simon of NASA's Astrobiology Institute, who led the study, targeted Mono Lake because it has high arsenic levels.

Arsenic and phosphorous are chemically similar, so she speculated that a microbe exposed to both might be able to substitute one for the other. "Arsenic is toxic mainly because its chemical behavior is so similar to that of phosphorous. As a result, organisms have a hard time telling these elements apart. □

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Contratista EEUU cumple un año preso sin cargos en Cuba

LA HABANA (Reuters) - Un año después de su detención en el aeropuerto de La Habana, el contratista estadounidense Alan Gross sigue tras las rejas en Cuba y sin solución a la vista para un caso que frenó un fugaz acercamiento entre ambas naciones.

Gross, de 61 años, está desesperado por volver a casa para ayudar a su hija que fue diagnosticada con cáncer, pero las precarias conversaciones entre Washington y La Habana han arrojado poco o ningún avance.

Funcionarios estadounidenses dicen que pidieron en varias ocasiones la liberación de Gross, pero nunca recibieron una respuesta o explicación sobre el caso contra él. Según versiones, el contratista ha perdido casi 41 kilos de peso y padece varios problemas de salud.

Autoridades cubanas han acusado a Gross, detenido el 3 de diciembre del año pasado, de introducir equipos de comunicación satelital ilegales en Cuba y quizás de espiar durante lo que su familia describió como cinco



Foto de archivo del contratista estadounidense Alan Gross y su esposa, Judy, en Jerusalén, oct 23 2010. REUTERS/Family Photograph/Handout

viajes a la isla en los nueve meses antes de su arresto.

Su trabajo era financiado por un programa del Gobierno estadounidense para promover cambios políticos en Cuba, pero Washington dice que Gross era una persona bienintencionada que ayudaba a la pequeña

comunidad judía a conectarse a Internet.

Líderes judíos en Cuba han negado públicamente que conocían a Gross, aunque algunos sí han dicho conocerlo.

Gross, actualmente detenido

en una celda de un hospital militar de La Habana, no ha sido acusado formalmente de ningún crimen y continúa bajo investigación, dijo el fiscal general, Darío Delgado, a periodistas el 23 de noviembre.

El funcionario no explicó el

retraso, pero dijo que “no hay ninguna dificultad. Todo marcha según como estaba previsto”.

Peter Kahn, el abogado de Gross en Washington, no está de acuerdo. “La encarcelación de Alan durante un año sin claridad sobre el proceso legal que enfrentará o sus tiempos es algo grotesco. Viola todos los estándares internacionales de justicia y debido proceso”, dijo en un comunicado.

“Continuamos instando a las autoridades cubanas a liberar inmediatamente a Alan por razones humanitarias y por el hecho de que ya ha cumplido un año en prisión”, añadió el miércoles.

Si Cuba retiene a Gross para lograr concesiones de Estados Unidos no lo han dicho públicamente, aunque hay versiones de que aspiran a canjearlo por cinco agentes presos en Estados Unidos u obtener garantías de que los programas como el que financiaba el trabajo del contratista serán interrumpidos. □

Alto diplomático brasileño sería nuevo canciller

BRASILIA (Reuters) - La presidenta electa de Brasil, Dilma Rousseff, designaría al diplomático de carrera Antonio Patriota como ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, dijo el jueves a Reuters una fuente del Gobierno, en una señal de continuidad con la política exterior enfocada en mercados emergentes.

“Aún no hay un anuncio formal, pero todo indica que será Patriota”, dijo el funcionario, quien solicitó el anonimato debido a que no está autorizado para hablar sobre el tema.

Patriota fue felicitado por colegas del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores el jueves en un evento en Río de Janeiro, informaron medios locales.

Se espera que el diplomático, que se desempeña actualmente como secretario general de la Cancillería brasileña, continúe con las líneas generales de la política exterior de Brasil.

Sin embargo, podría ser menos frontal que el ministro de Relaciones Exteriores actual, Celso Amorim, en temas como Irán. El presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva enfadó a Estados Unidos y a otras potencias occidentales este año cuando intentó mediar en la disputa por el programa nuclear iraní.

Rousseff, quien asumirá su mandato el 1 de enero, ha dicho que buscará vínculos amistosos con Washington e indicó que podría distanciarse de Irán al criticar duramente el historial de abusos a los derechos humanos de la república islámica. □

Venezuela realiza elecciones regionales rezagadas

CARACAS (Reuters) - Venezuela elegirá el domingo a dos gobernadores y 11 alcaldes en el segundo pulso del año en las urnas entre el presidente Hugo Chávez y sus adversarios. A continuación algunos datos respecto a la contienda:

- El 10 por ciento del total nacional de votantes, 1,76 millones de personas, está habilitado para seleccionar 13 cargos entre 57 candidatos en ocho estados.

Actualmente, el oficialismo controla 15 estados. Además tenía la gobernación de Guárico hasta septiembre cuando quedó vacante por la muerte su titular en un accidente de tránsito.

La oposición gobierna cinco estados y la Alcaldía Metropolitana de Caracas, mientras que el pequeño partido Patria Para Todos (PPT), que abandonó este año la alianza oficialista, tiene Amazonas y Lara.

- La oposición rechazó que el Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE) convocara

esta elección postergando de nuevo la de legisladores regionales que debió realizarse en el 2009.

Al mismo tiempo critica el avance del Ejecutivo sobre el poder regional. Chávez impulsa reformas legales para eliminar competencias y presupuesto a gobernaciones y alcaldías y transferirlas a comunidades organizadas que deben contribuir a crear un Estado socialista y que sean supervisadas por la presidencia.

En la contienda del domingo, serán elegidos siete alcaldes a los que se les venció el período en los municipios Achaguas, en Apure; Miranda, en Carabobo; Carrizal, en Miranda; Miranda, en Trujillo; Manuel Monge y Nirgua, en Yaracuy; y Miranda en Zulia, por vencimiento del período.

Por falta absoluta se harán votaciones por las autoridades del municipio Arismendi, en Nueva Esparta; el Panamericano, en Táchira; Boconó; en Trujillo, y Maracaibo, en Zulia. □

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